

HUNDREDTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

CHARLES K. WHEELER

THE UNIVERSE AN EVOLUTION

IS A UNIVERSE ONE OF NECESSITY



Class BD 553

Book W 5

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

HUNDREDTH CENTURY
PHILOSOPHY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR



AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE I OR EGO. Cloth,
115 pages, \$1.00.

HUNDREDTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY. Cloth,
171 pages, \$1.00.

Tracts in Criticism :

Prof. Fiske's Latest Sophistry. 5 cents.

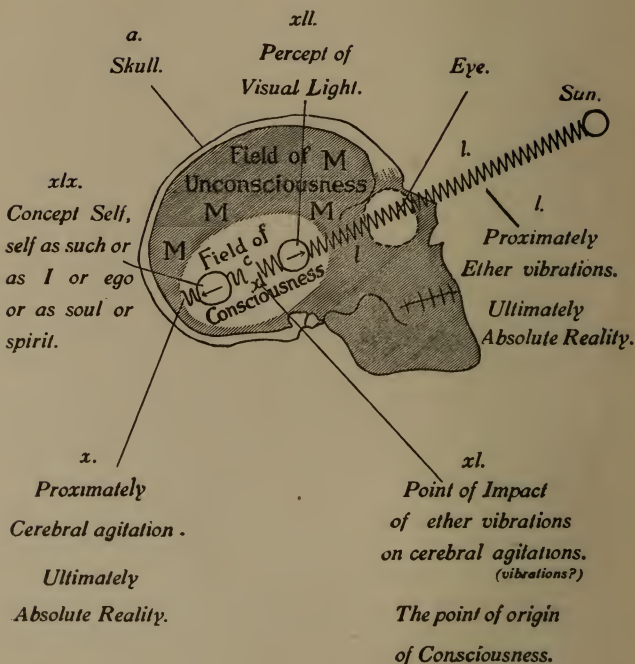
The Outrage of Compulsory Vaccination. 5 cents.

The Moral Sense an Automobile — Not a Horse and
Waggon. 5 cents.



Emerson Centennial Souvenir Card. 30 cents.

Perception of Light and Conception of Self



HUNDREDTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

BY

CHARLES KIRKLAND WHEELER

11



BOSTON

PRESS OF JAMES H. WEST COMPANY

1906

IN THE DIAGRAM

l = certain ether vibrations entering the eye.

x = certain cerebral agitations or vibrations with which the above (l) come into collision at c .

xl = the primary *resultant* agitation or vibration this collision gives rise to, and of which the mental correlate is consciousness or a near approach to it. But the consciousness of what? That is determined by the primary resultant xl reacting as it were, and itself, in its turn, colliding with one or the other of its own factors. As it does so with the factor l , as is the case when the attention is directed outward, a second resultant xll obtains, the mental correlate of which is quite consciousness altogether, and with the percept visual light for content — or that of which there is then consciousness; or as it (xl) reacts colliding with the factor x , as it does when the attention is directed inward, there is then a second resultant, xlx , and of which the mental correlate is consciousness with the concept self, the self of self-consciousness, for content — or that, again, of which there is consciousness. (See page 27.)

One thing further: Notice that the perception or consciousness of light is the mental correlate of a *resultant* xll and not of a compound merely $x + l + l$;

and as of a resultant, then a consciousness as involving nothing of a consciousness as should be that the mental correlate of what (l) is only a factor of that resultant (xll). That is to say, the perception or consciousness of light we may know, *a priori*, can by no possibility be any consciousness of ether vibrations, and which indeed we from *experience* know it is not.

Just so precisely with the conception or consciousness of “self.” It, too, is the mental correlate of a *resultant*, the resultant xlx , and not of a compound $x + l + x$. Wherefore everything, for like reasons, follows as in the perception or consciousness of light; that is, that in the conception or consciousness of the “self” of self-consciousness, there is in that moment no consciousness of brain or cerebral molecular agitations, or, by implication, of the conscious entity their mental correlate; none as even having *reference* to that of which there is no consciousness: it is simply impossible. How then, pray, can consciousness of self, that is, self-consciousness, be one with the any consciousness of the conscious entity of itself which itself (the conscious entity) there was not first *even a consciousness of*? Indeed, the identification of “self” with the conscious entity is thus seen to be entirely an afterthought, an inference only, one arbitrary and utterly without warrant. (See pages 116, 117.)

BD 553
W5

LIBRARY of CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
OCT 25 1906
Copyright Entry
0. 25, 1906
CLASS A Xxc., No.
158969.
COPY B.

~~26.1~~
5453

Copyright, 1906
By CHARLES K. WHEELER

H.B. Aug 21, 1911

To

HER, — FRIEND AND COMPANION OF MY
LATER YEARS

TO WHOSE MOST LOVING APPRECIATION AND
UNWEARIED ENCOURAGEMENT I AM
GREATLY INDEBTED

PREFACE

NOT a few of the views put forth in this work are the very reverse of those current and even hoary with the ages of human thought. But why, touching the profoundest of subjects, should it once be even dreamt that the ideas of the childhood of the race should be those of its maturity? The doctrine of the universe an evolution — which, that it took some two hundred thousand years to arrive at, is evidently not a childhood's idea — relegates to oblivion the idea of the universe as watch and watchmaker; for with the universe an evolution is absolutely impossible everything of that idea, and that too whether watchmaker outside the watch or inside. Moreover, with the universe not as watch and watchmaker, and we have a universe one

of necessity ; for there is absolutely again no halting station between the one and the other. So that here we have two ideas not readily or at all within childhood's grasp, superseding one which, that it is a childhood's idea, is not only that, but a childish idea. And as with the childish idea of the universe as watch and watchmaker superseded with the advancement of the race, why not so with all childhood's ideas on the deeper subjects, with its advancement ?

CONTENTS



	PAGE
1. Matter the Root of all	9
2. Matter Not Wholly Mind	12
3. Final Reality Veiled by Its Activity	14
4. Final Reality Not to be Reasoned Out . . .	17
5. Mind Only Act or Activity	18
6. The Absolute Not Soul or Spirit?	22
7. What May Be Soul or Spirit?	25
8. What is the Perception of Light?	27
9. Two Modes of Absolute Being	33
10. Two Modes Not Coexistent	36
11. Is the More Real the Less Realizable? . . .	39
12. Modes of Activity or Energy	43
13. Mind or Consciousness Not Primary	45
14. Matter the Spring of Consciousness	59
15. Life and Mind Only Physical Force	74
16. Consciousness Not a Thing in Continuity . .	77
17. Only One's Own Life Directly Realized . .	80
18. Paradox	83
19. Is Consciousness Universal?	85
20. Not Conscious of Universal Consciousness .	88

	PAGE
21. How Signalized Modes of Energy?	91
22. No Realization of Being of God	94
23. Ours Not a Universal Consciousness	101
24. The World Within an Illusion	103
25. The Physical as Objective Thought	107
26. Objective Thought Not Always Verifiable	111
27. Why Not Directly Conscious You of Me?	118
28. Why Not See Your Own Brain as Such?	127
29. Is It Vibrations as Such?	131
30. What is Permanent is of Necessity	133
31. Man a Necessity to Absolute Being	135
32. Man Only a By-product or By-end	139
33. Creative Act or Activity the Main End	141
34. Proof of Man only a By-product	142
35. Man No More than Men the Main Product	149
36. The Volitional Utterly Excluded	151
37. Evolution Only Confirms	153
38. The Positive Moral also Excluded	155
39. Blessings No Evidence of Beneficence	156
40. Blessings Only Such in Effect	161
41. Suffering Has No Mission	163
42. Evil No Mystery	167
43. At Last	170

HUNDREDTH CENTURY

PHILOSOPHY

I

Not Matter as Such but as Something
the Foundation of Everything

Inquirer. Consciousness, as we know it, would seem associated only with matter, matter as brain, and as dependent on it; so that matter, which is the foundation, proximate or ultimate, of everything else, would seem even the foundation of everything altogether, — but is it?

Oracle. Yes and no; matter, *as such*, is *not* that foundation; but matter, *as something*, is.

Inq. What do you mean by matter, as such, in contradistinction from matter as something?

Or. Well, take a billiard ball (or a solid

cube, which would be to the same effect), tie a string to it, and whirl it around as rapidly as you can; it will then look to be a ring. But the billiard ball is *not* a ring, it is a sphere. The ring, then, as a ring, that is to say, the ring, as such, is the sphere as it *appears*; and we say that that, what it appears, is not what the billiard ball is *in itself*, or in reality, which is, in reality, a sphere. But still the ring is *something*, something *absolute*; as whatsoever could be nothing save only as from which everything withdrawn nothing would be; and everything of the ring withdrawn and the billiard ball would be, which itself at least something, not everything could be withdrawn from the ring and nothing be. The ring, therefore, cannot be nothing; in other words, must be something. But, as something, it is what the billiard ball is, which itself, as I have said, is at least something, whatever more it is. The ring, then, *as such*, is *not* what the billiard ball is; but as *something*, it *is*.

So, matter, as such, is to be understood to be the Absolute Reality and foundation of things as that Reality *appears* — but *only* as It appears; that which It appears being not

what the Absolute Reality is in Itself, or is in fact, which is something else; tho what else is utterly inscrutable to us.

But matter still, like the ring, is at least *something* as something absolute; and as it is that, it is what the Absolute Reality is, which Itself is at least that, whatever more or else It is. Matter is something since it could, no more than could the ring, be nothing save only as from it everything withdrawn, nothing would be; and everything of matter would be as the Absolute Reality was, which, that Itself, certainly something, not everything could be withdrawn from matter and nothing be. Matter, therefore, cannot be nothing; in other words, must be something in the sense of a thing absolute. But as that, it is what the Absolute Reality is, which is at least, as I have said, something whatever more or else It is.

Matter, then, as such, is not, but matter as verily something, is indeed the Absolute Reality and foundation of all things, even of consciousness itself.

2

Matter Not Wholly Mind

Inq. Then it is with no propriety said that matter is "only a group of qualities having no existence independent of the mind"?

Or. Why, no, of course not — not if it is intended, as it usually is, to convey the impression that only mind is involved in its or their existence. The ring has no existence but for the "eye and mind" (eye *brain* and mind), to be sure; but still, too, has none even *with* the eye and mind, *save only for the billiard ball*. That is, even tho the ring persists any moment where, for that moment, the ball is not, and persists only by reason of the eye and mind, yet even *then* it does so only by reason of the billiard ball *first or last* still, since it only obtains at all to be anything to persist because of the billiard ball.

So, matter itself, even tho a group of qualities having no existence independent of the mind, has still, too, none even *with* the mind,

but for the Absolute Reality and foundation of all things beyond, only for which once ever obtains our impression of matter at all; and so only for which, once for an instant in the conceivable contingency of the momentary absence of the Absolute Reality, ever persisting.

Inq. You mean, then, to be understood as insisting that it is only pure assumption, and, withal, a perfect absurdity, as is represented that in our seeing and handling matter, we see and handle only a group of qualities which only the perceiving mind is involved in the existence of; a pure assumption and altogether absurdity that we are not, rather, seeing and handling a group which even yet that having no existence but for the mind, do still even with the mind have none but for a substratum of independent reality, that reality the Absolute Reality, and *which* very *Itself* we are looking *at* at least, and handling, as ever we see and handle matter.

Or. Exactly so.

3

The Activity of the Absolute Reality
Rather Conceals than Reveals It

Inq. But the illustration of the billiard ball would suggest that motion or activity of a thing rather hides than reveals the thing active or in motion.

Or. Truly so ; and may hide even activity itself, as such ; that is, motion or activity may conceal motion or activity. As notice, that when the billiard ball is made to whirl at a very rapid rate, the appearance is that of a solid ring in statu quo, and not that of anything as active or in motion.

Inq. Then, you would say that the Absolute Reality Itself, that that, too, may be concealed from us by reason of Its very activity ; and again, in instances, concealed even the activity itself, as such, by that activity ?

Or. I certainly would.

Inq. But this is quite the contrary of the view generally held, which is that it is only in

its activity that the Final or Absolute Reality ("God," if It be "God") reveals Itself to us.

Or. Oh yes ; but when was ever the view generally held the correct one ? But why not it the Final Reality's activity that conceals It ? Men generally, such the 'confusion of their minds, declare in one and the same breath that the Absolute Reality, as It is in Itself, is hidden from us ; and, again, that It is revealed to us. However, if concealed from us, as It surely is, *something* conceals It ; and why not as likely Its activity that does it as anything else ? If *our* activity, too, — mental activity, — such as *that* is, might contribute to hiding It, still why not yet Its own, besides, do so and It be doubly hidden ?

Then again, indeed, it may be due to the Final Reality's activity that there is withheld from our any possible knowledge whether there is in fact *anything* active, anything a substratum beyond and distinct from activity itself which is active as there is activity, — tho that there should not be is not the least within our comprehension, it being only what we may think *of*, not anything we can in the leastwise think, think as realizing.

Inq. But, in any event, as there might be Reality more final than activity itself, it would appear, from all that you have said, that we must see and handle It as ever we see and handle matter, tho not as recognizing It as that which we see and handle.

Or. Truly so. But what still It is, what positively It is, and in Itself It is, we knowing as knowing that we know what It is, is quite utterly beyond our mental grasp.

4

Cannot Reason out What the Absolute
Reality is — only What It is Not
and That It is Not Mind

Inq. And yet that all this may be true so far as our directly cognizing with our physical senses such Reality is concerned, still may we not, from knowing what Its activity is, *reason* out what It Itself is which is active?

Or. No, not in the least. For the anything active, and the activity of that thing, are of two utterly distinct categories. Recalling the illustration of the billiard ball and ring, can you *reason* from the *ring* to knowing whether it is a sphere or a cube, whether a ball of ivory, or a ball of snow, that is in motion?

5

Mind Known only as Act or Activity

Or. In respect of mind, indeed, all that on introspection, or all *anyway*, that we know, as knowing that we know, is *mind* an *act or activity*, such as feeling, perceiving, conceiving, and the like. What it is which acts or is active as we have mind — mind itself being act or activity — of that we know nothing; or nothing except as to what it is *not*, and that, at least, it is *not mind*; since if the activity be *itself mind*, the *thing active* can by *no possibility* be mind. Can *that in* motion be itself the *motion* of that in motion? Can the billiard ball be *itself* what is only the *motion* of the billiard ball? Is there identity of nature or thing between the *clock* which goes and the *going* of the clock? Is it the time which is kept, which it is the going of, which keeps the time, forsooth! Is it not, rather, the clock, which is a thing *radically different* from the time which is kept

which it is the going of which keeps the time ?

But if the clock, and its going, are not to be thought of an identity of nature, if it is not to be thought that it is the activity of the time that is kept which it is the going of which keeps the time, *then how shall that which is active be itself mind, if what is its activity be mind ?*

And in fact it is only in reference to mind that there is this idiotic confusion of the thing active with its activity.

In view, therefore, of what I have been saying, what could be sillier than talking about the mind being active — except, of course, for short, as when, for short, we speak of the sun's rising ? — what sillier, when there is no such thing as mind active ; or, rather, no such as mind inactive ; since, as I have implied, when the mind is not active *there is no mind ?*

Inq. But we can say at least that what acts as we have mind is mental faculty.

Or. Why, yes, say that much, of course.

Inq. And yet what are we to understand by mental faculty ?

Or. Well, what but mental capacity sim-

ply, capacity mental not as being itself mind, but only as being that capable, under circumstances, of becoming or affording mind, as is the clock capable of affording or keeping time while yet not itself the time it is capable of affording or keeping? What, I say, is mental faculty ~~of~~ this mental capacity, and capacity, too, as with that for keeping time, but a dependent attribute lodged with something *radically different from mind itself*, as capacity for keeping time is lodged with the *clock*, something radically different, something of an utterly distinct category from that of its going or of the time which is kept?

Inq. And we cannot, then, as knowing the activity to be mind, reason back to what the activity is activity of as we have mind?

Or. No, not in the least.

Inq. And you mean to say that, even yet that should be inconceivable mind as activity without substratum distinct from it, still nothing incongruous with this is it that should be inconceivable by us *what* that substratum might be; and that, in fact, what it is, is infinitely beyond our any possible knowing as knowing that we know what it is; we at best

knowing, with any certainty, only what it is not, and that most certainly it is not mind?

Or. Yes, I mean to say practically that.

And now to return to the general proposition, namely, that we can no better *reason* out what the Absolute Reality is, what positively It is, than we can *observe* what It is with our physical senses.

Why, we cannot, as I have before said, even know It to be *anything* beyond *activity itself*; cannot even know It to be a substratum to activity beyond; that is, we cannot even know any such as physical energy to be the activity of anything at all; cannot know it to be anything more than the activity of activity, so to speak, inconceivable as may appear to us activity without the activity of something a something distinct from it.

But so long as is not positively realizable by us the impossibility of the activity of nothing, that is, activity void of a substratum which, distinct from it, is that which is active, that long we must rest the matter just there at its unrealizableness, and not at its impossibility.

6

Absolute Reality Not Soul or Spirit?

Inq. But why might not that Final or Absolute Reality as the thing active be understood to be soul or spirit?

Or. In the first place, simply because those are terms used with the uttermost confusion; used sometimes interchangeably as referring to one and the same thing; and sometimes as referring to things assumed altogether distinct.

And then, in the second place, because over and above all this confusion, they still are used, both of them, always as referring to what it is intended to be understood to be an entity distinct radically and altogether from everything of the physical, and the physical from everything of it, — nothing of which can be true of the Absolute Reality. The very *essence* of the ring, in the late illustration, was the billiard ball as very *constituent* of it. The ring had no beginning but for the ball, the ball not as watchmaker outside the watch and

author of it, but as *very element* of the *ring's constitution*; and neither had the ring any indefinite *persistence* but for the indefinite persistence of the ball, and the ball as *that constituent*. Precisely so of the Final Reality and the physical. The latter would have no being but for the former; the former not as cause but as *very constituent* of the latter. The Absolute Reality, then, as not an entity thus distinct from the physical, cannot possibly be said to answer to soul or spirit which is, in both the vulgar and the academic understanding of it.

Inq. So that as to what that Reality is, we shall have to remain in the dark, in the dark completely?

Or. Completely; remain so as to what positively It is, we only positively knowing what It is not, and that It certainly is not mind.

Inq. But men say It is Mind, and God that mind.

Or. Yes; and in the same breath don't they tell you It is inscrutable, that "God" is inscrutable, and then proceed at once to tell you what that inscrutable is, and that it is

mind? *How should they know it to be mind if inscrutable?* How should they any better know it to be mind, if inscrutable, than I know it to be physical, if inscrutable?

If only they would rest it there at its inscrutability, and attempt or assume nothing farther about it, how many problems would be laid to rest forthwith, or be dissipated! Take the greatest, the most troublesome of them all, that of evil. Why, there would be no problem of evil at all only for that a Being of God is assumed, a Being of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, only to reconcile evil with which is all the problem. Drop an infinite personality, a Being infinite in love, wisdom, and goodness, at the heart of things, and all the enigma of evil falls at once out of it. But men are uneasy but as they think they know even what they say it is impossible for them to know. And still could anything be more logically inconsistent and stupid than to assume the impossibility of knowing the Absolute Reality, and then straightway assume of it a personality!

7

What May Soul or Spirit Answer to?

Inq. But if the Absolute Reality cannot be known as to what positively it is, and only as to what it is not, and that it cannot possibly be identified with soul or spirit, as such, at least, then to what might such be said to answer as intelligently answering to anything at all?

Or. Well, to answer to that as was subjectively entertained in consciousness what, as objectively entertained, is recognized as matter.

Inq. But that would be to view soul or spirit as not even an entity at all, let alone the matter of its being one distinct from the physical; for that could not be an entity as was entity anything absolute which, only an appearance, is what it is only from the way in which it is entertained in consciousness; and which differently entertained, would be something else.

Or. True; but an entity altogether in the orthodox sense, soul or spirit most certainly is not. In short, such could be said to answer simply to what is *felt* to exist and, say, to be seeing (or reflecting) as there is something seen; and yet which no more has an absolute or independent existence than has what is seen (say visual light) an absolute or independent existence. How this is may be afforded exposition and illustration as we should more particularly consider the perception of light.

8

What is the Perception of Light?

Or. And what is the perception of light, what, but a *consciousness* of a *somewhat*, a somewhat which, as the mind is turned outward is *seen* as the objective, and as a thing outstanding, and as the physical, and seen even as a substance or matter as visual light should seem to be substance or matter ; and yet which somewhat, the *same* somewhat, as the mind is turned inward, is *felt* as is felt the subjective, and *felt* to be a thing instanding and perceiving — *felt* as is felt the subjective, tho not felt and recognized as the subjective, *as such*, but as self, and self, perhaps, as soul or spirit, and the thing perceiving ?

But now then, however that that somewhat is felt as is felt the subjective, and recognized as the mind is turned inward as an entity instanding, and as soul or spirit perceiving, yet still that soul or spirit *felt* is no more a something *inhering in or one with* the *actual* entity

(brain, or the conscious entity correlated therewith) *instanding* behind the subjective (soul or spirit as felt) than is it as something *seen*, and visual light as the mind or consciousness is turned outward, a something *inhering* in or one with the actual thing and entity (proximately, ether vibrations) *outstanding* beyond the objective (visual light). In a word, no more than is visual light the thing primarily looked *at* but not seen, is soul or spirit as the thing *felt* to be that which looks, that *indeed* which *looks*, however much it *seems* to us to be that which does. Both the visual light seen, and the self, as such, felt, or the self, as soul or spirit felt, these both equally, as percept and concept respectively are *practically* but mental *constructions* put upon (or interpretations given) the somewhat aforesaid; the one or the other construction being determined as the mind or consciousness is turned outward, or as it is turned inward; as it is turned outward determined by the on-coming ether vibrations, or as it is turned inward determined by the cerebral agitation encountered. The mind or consciousness of the moment — and which by the way is *that* of the moment of

impact of ether vibrations on eye and brain, and no other — is first unconsciously shaped to view, and then consciously views one of the two mental constructions, or *itself as it were*, as the perceived, and an absolute entity outstanding — which it is not ; and the other as at once the conceived, and the conceived as a conceiver and perceiver, and an entity absolute instanding — which, at least a conceiver and entity instanding, it again is not. Wherefore it happens that that mind or consciousness is just as much *in* as it were, the perceived as in what is *felt* to be the perceiver — just as much *in* the *visual light* as in what is *felt* to be the *self*, either, as such, or as soul or spirit, perceiving the visual light. Meanwhile, in both instances, it is a mask only, of the real perceiver (proximately, ether vibrations, ultimately the one only Absolute Reality) that is perceived ; and, again, a fiction, “a counterfeit presentment” only, of the perceiver and conceiver (proximately the brain, ultimately the one only Absolute Reality again) that is felt to be such. So that the *real* perceiver and conceiver, the Absolute Reality, lends Itself to self-deception on two two-fold scores ; one

as It thinks It sees what It is looking *at*, and that what It sees is a thing absolute and outstanding; and another as It thinks what It feels to be a perceiver and conceiver perceiving and conceiving to be veritably such, and to be, too, veritably an entity absolute instanding.

Let it not fail to be noticed, and what I repeat, that the mind or consciousness involved in these constructions is *that* mind or consciousness obtaining in the *instant* of *the collision of the ether vibrations with eye and brain*; *that* mind or consciousness, and no other, *not* that, even, of the minute before, much less that of the hour or day before. And the either construction is one or the other according as *that* mind or consciousness is given an inward or given an outward direction; the direction given determining whether the *one* thing, *that* mind or consciousness, assume visual light for content, or assume self, self perhaps felt to be soul or spirit, for content.

What, then, here we have, and which may be said to answer to soul or spirit, as such, is what no more than is visual light, as such, an

entity outright and altogether ; but is only an *appearance* of being an entity, which, an appearance, it together with visual light that, too, only an appearance of being such, we are compelled of the constitution of things to regard as the two aspects, as it were, of the but *one* affair of the mental resultant of the impact of ether vibrations on eye and brain ; two aspects, one or the other according as the attention is directed outward, or again as it is directed inward. And it is that aspect as it were, and of an independent entity as it would appear to be, of two which is the one *felt* as is felt the subjective tho not consciously felt to be the subjective, as such ; and *felt* to be an entity altogether tho not one, and a conscious entity seeing the light still that not seeing at all ; — it is this which may be said to answer in the consciousness to soul or spirit in the perception of light.

And now then, as in the perception of light, so it is in perception in general, and in conception as well — in a word in the event of consciousness in general — and that what soul or spirit may be said to answer to is *that which is felt as is felt the subjective*, and *felt* to be

an entity outright and altogether, and to be one conscious and seeing and conceiving, felt to be such still that nothing such entity it is, and much less *the* conscious entity which really has being, independent being, and which does indeed perceive and conceive and the like.

Inq. But soul or spirit, as such, only an appearance as only which is matter, as such, then as should one be "only a group of qualities having no existence independent of the mind," the other would be only that. And however that the like is not true of matter as it is meant — which you say it is — to convey the idea that mind, and mind alone, is involved in matter's existence, still, if as much were indeed to be said of matter, the same would have to be said of soul or spirit, too.

Or. Precisely.

Inq. And that soul or spirit is only a group of qualities — or to that effect — having no existence independent of the mind?

Or. Truly so, — if in very truth, I say, as much were to be said of one, the same is to be of the other.

9

Two Modes of Being Conceivable to
Absolute Reality

Inq. But then, at least, might not be possible fundamentally to Final Reality two modes of being of which one could be claimed for soul or spirit, as should be the other for the physical; two modes as are mechanical energy and heat two modes of one and the same thing, physical energy; two modes, which convertible into each other as are these, are alternately assumed by the Absolute Reality in the course of inconceivable eons of time as relates to Being at large; but in periods coincident with life and death as relates to finite or human being? Might not at least thus be possible fundamentally two modes of being to the Final Reality, and in this way something like an approach be made to soul or spirit an entity in the genuinely orthodox sense?

Or. Perhaps; and as might such be the fact, at least would be afforded a basis, in a

way, for the determined claim for a spirit world as it is called. Moreover, with the two modes, the soul or spirit world, and the physical, convertible into each other as are mechanical energy and heat, and thus equivalents, neither the superior of the other, the soul or spirit world of no higher order than this world with which we are familiar, no higher and only different, — as this might be afforded, would be supplied explanation of why the grade of the intelligence assumed by some to be reporting itself from there is no higher than — if as high as — what is met with right here in this world.

And yet supposing all this were true, what for the matter of anything gained thereby for soul or spirit an entity altogether, would it amount to? How still is that an entity in anything the orthodox sense which is one only as is mechanical energy or as is heat, things convertible into each other?

Inq. Evidently not at all so, I must confess.

Or. True; and besides, the mode of being of the Absolute Reality for any moment or cycle of time would not then be exhaustive

of that Reality's capacity for being; and as not exhaustive, Its being would not any moment be infinite. And which is the more probable — that the being of the Absolute Reality obtains alternately after two modes, and the being — that is to say, Being — not any moment infinite; or that It — Being — obtains after only one and is unchangeable and infinite?

Inq. I should hesitate to say.

Or. Yes, you may; but neither the Christian, nor the theistic world in general, would.

I O

The Two Modes Not Coexistent

Or. Besides, again, soul or spirit, and the physical, being comparable to mechanical energy and heat, then once a given measure of the former converted into, once in manifestation as, the latter — the physical universe, or the human body — as mechanical energy is convertible into heat, once this event, and, instantaneously, is that the end of that soul or spirit, as such, thus converted, thus in manifestation; as much so as in the like event of the conversion of mechanical energy into, or of its manifestation as, heat, is that the end of that mechanical energy, as such, thus converted, thus in other manifestation. That is, such once thus converted, once thus in manifestation in the physical does no more still obtain coexisting with that physical as back of or within and animating it than does mechanical energy once converted into, once in manifestation as heat, still, as such, obtain back of or

within that heat coexisting with it and animating it. It would be in effect to say, once such as you yourself as soul or spirit in manifestation in your physical body, or once such as "God" Himself as soul or spirit in manifestation in the physical universe, that that for the time being, would be the end of both of you as soul or spirit. And could ever anything of this be said of either of you as were indeed soul or spirit radically and altogether an entity in the orthodox sense?

So that, has anything substantial been gained, I ask again, of real satisfaction for the notion of soul or spirit an entity, even as were allowed the Absolute Reality to obtain fundamentally after two distinct and interchangeable modes, one of them being understood to be soul or spirit?

Moreover, is it quite likely, anyway, that that Reality obtains after such manner? For at least this would have to be said about it as relates to that Reality at large,—and as I have before remarked,—that either of Its two modes of being or manifestation, as not including the other, would not as a mode of being or manifestation be exhaustive; and as

not exhaustive, could not be infinite ; and either the current manifest universe is not exhaustive and not infinite ; or then as it should be, any second or other mode of being or manifestation such as that of soul or spirit would be, — as should be self-evident to anyone, — an utter impossibility. Either horn of the dilemma may be taken — either that the present manifest universe is not exhaustive and not infinite ; or that in fact and indeed it is, and that another fundamental mode of being or order of manifestation of the Absolute Reality is not possible. Which will it be ? Is the former view very likely soon to be taken ? In any event, be all this as it may, soul or spirit only a mode of being of the Absolute Reality of which the physical should be another, is all that could possibly be conceded, even were that to be, as a possible approach (if approach it be) of such to an entity, an entity outright and altogether.

I I

The Paradox of the More Real the Less Realizable

Inq. I can understand, once the development of the egg into the hatched chicken, that that is the end of that egg; or, once mechanical energy is converted into heat, that that is the end of that mechanical energy, as such, thus converted — the end at least until there is a revulsion (due to, no matter what) or change of heart, so to speak, of chick or heat; and understand, too, what should be the parallel of this, and that, soul, once converted into or in manifestation as brain, or, say again, spirit, once converted into, once in manifestation as the physical universe, that that is the end, for the time being, of such soul or such spirit thus converted, thus in manifestation. And you having impressed me with this and other considerations as you have, I must acknowledge little or nothing is gained for soul or spirit an entity, at least in the orthodox

sense, by the assumption of two modes of being of the Absolute Reality. But I cannot even yet bring my mind to contemplating such as anything short of an entity absolutely, and as distinct utterly from physical after all.

Or. But perhaps, in reason, cannot be avoided what you are so averse to. But why loth to think it less? Why, look here,—every idealist, every transcendentalist, every spiritualist (using the word in the philosophic sense), every dualist, every metaphysician, every theologian, whether of present or past generations, contemplates such as soul (or spirit) as the most real thing of anything unless it be mind; regards it as far more real than matter which is often fantastically animadverted to as even but its “shadow,” and the forms of which or the physical world generally, as but the “phantasmagoria” of mind, “the baseless fabric of a vision,” and so on. And yet, and yet, you and I can look across space and directly see and realize each other’s physical body, still that we cannot in the least, each other’s soul or spirit — cannot as being unable to realize each other’s consciousness or mind at all. In other words, we can directly

perceive what is far and away the *less* real, but cannot the far and away *more* real! — something altogether absurd to suppose to be the case, if soul or spirit were really the more real.

Now what, in any common-sense view, is the most ready, as well as the most rational explanation of this paradox but that such as soul or spirit is *not there* — is not as an *entity*, entity *distinct from the physical*, there; and that *that* is why we may not realize it as we do the physical body? As such *entity* not there, — which is *precisely* what would be the case *either* as such as soul or spirit as distinct from matter or the physical was a difference of *form* of *entertaining* a thing only, rather than a difference between two utterly differently constituted entities; *or*, again, as it was only a difference of *mode of being* of one and the same thing of which the human body, or again the physical universe, was another?

Inq. Yes, but what would be the inevitable, stock in trade, and stereotyped reply to this, what but that “only are spiritual things seen with spiritual eyes”?

Or. Ah, but that is only arbitrarily to

invoke into being both a vague order of eyes and a vaguer entity — arbitrarily since for neither of which is there either necessity, or the warrant of one iota of evidence or sound reason. Besides, it does not get over the difficulty at all. The point is how with *any* eyes you can better see the *less* real than the *more* real. It is not simply a *difference* between two things that is involved; if it were, this little ruse of spiritual eyes to see spiritual things might pass. But it is the *particular* difference of more *real*, one thing than another, which sidetracks it as of any avail. "Spiritual eyes may be needed to see spiritual things"; but that does not in the least get us over the difficulty of with *any* eyes the better seeing the *less* real than the *more* real. Such a proposition then would seem, rather a makeshift than anything else of ignorance and stupidity to yet keep fast hold of the cherished fantasy of soul or spirit an entity absolute and one distinct altogether from everything both of the physical and the mental.

I 2

Modes of Activity or Energy the Modes
in statu quo and Modes a Change
of Mode

Inq. But now, if we may not know the Final or Absolute Reality, and It cannot be assumed one with soul or spirit, as is the general understanding of these, still must we not at least know something clear and definite of Its activity, however that our any intelligent knowing begin and end with that ?

Or. Indeed we can ; but our knowledge even of that is limited to its modes, we knowing nothing of it outside these, these we vulgarly recognizing, not as modes of activity, as such, but as matter, soul, spirit, physical force, and the rest ; and which, therefore, must themselves be understood as differing, (1) in themselves as different modes of activity of one and same thing differ ; and again as differing (2) in appearance as the same mode might objectively, or, again, might subjectively occupy consciousness.

Inq. And how are to be identified in consciousness matter, soul, and the rest with the different modes of activity, or with their different aspects as differently entertained?

Or. Well, understanding modes of activity as practically what are, in the parlance of science, modes of energy, we may say that *there are modes of energy, the MODES in statu quo*; and again *modes a CHANGE of mode* (or want of all mode, in a way), that is, modes which energy assumes in transitu from one mode in statu quo to another in statu quo again, the latter being what is to be understood as the activity of the former. We may say this, and then further that with the former entertained in consciousness *objectively* would such as *matter* be identified; or as entertained *subjectively* would such as soul or spirit be; while with the latter, that is, with *modes a change of mode* as entertained *objectively* would be identified such as *physical force*; or as entertained *subjectively* would be identified in certain instances, if not in all, such as *mind and consciousness*. We may say this at least, to go no further.

I 3

Mind or Consciousness Not Primary

Inq. But this would be to have what, as objectively entertained, is matter, or as subjectively entertained, is soul or spirit, understood as something antecedent to mind and consciousness. For, a mode in statu quo must necessarily be antecedent to a mode a change of mode, only with which, a mode a change of mode, it is assumed, consciousness obtains.

Or. Yes, and logically at least, a mode a change of mode must be even itself antecedent to consciousness ; so that consciousness must be quite two removes, and not merely one, from being the one thing primary, or one among others primary.

Inq. But the general view is that it is before all things, or at least coincident and co-ordinate with whatsoever else is before all.

Or. And yet why should we even dream that it is? Why indeed when my own, your own, consciousness comes only *after the physical*, *after* our physical bodies — so far as we

know. My own had nothing, nothing that anyone knows, constructively to do with the origin or formation of my body — which, only as we know it had, have we the slightest reason for supposing it primary. That is, my body and brain are not *such* as they are because of the activity, in the first instance, of my own consciousness in the matter which, for aught anything that appears to the contrary, is but an aftermath, or at most but their coincident and co-ordinate. Why, then, aware of this as we are, once ever dream that consciousness is fundamental either alone or with anything else?

Inq. Yes, indeed, why the any consciousness primary of which we are conscious; but have we no evidence or reason for the belief in such of which we are not conscious, not directly at least, a consciousness in the background, “subliminal,” or shall I say “subjective,” and having to do with our bodily and cerebral organization and development?

Or. But even as there were such mind, a cellar mind as it were, to that more above-ground with which we are more directly and altogether familiar, still as allied yet with phys-

ical organization, *our* physical organization, as you assume it to be, it *still*, as so allied, *is as open to all the misgiving*, as in *any* case, of consciousness so allied as to whether or not it obtain an aftermath and caused, or obtain thing itself primary and cause, or possibly factor of cause, or obtain, indeed, possibly, but as coincident and co-ordinate.

Inq. But, anyway, may not be, is not in fact, *somehow*, mind fundamental in relation to the physical ; mind if not as conscious, then as unconscious ?

Or. But what do we know of unconscious mind except as mind first conscious ? Absolutely nothing. And what do we know of mind first conscious but of mind as still allied with, and apparently but the aftermath of physical organization ? Absolutely nothing again. Unconscious mind that was not first conscious, if there be such a thing, is so utterly beyond our any comprehension or understanding of it that there is not the least warrant for our recognizing it as mind at all, even if such in some form or other it should happen to be.

So that the situation remains intact of con-

sciousness, in relation to *our* any physical at any rate, as nothing primary.

But now then, it not primary with *us*, not so with *our* physical, why, at least in the light of the universe an evolution, must we not in all reason again think it not primary as it should obtain abroad and in the manifest universe or the physical at large? Or, if we must not, where then is the parallel between the universe and man? — between the evolution of manifest being in general, and the evolution or development of manifest being in particular and of the human being? Except, I say, that we must, what the logical pertinency of the egg or the like's particular development as shedding any light on the order or nature of the fundamental process or processes at large?

Or as I might say again, except that we must, where even is the point to what in the language of the sentimentalists is so much shouted of man a microcosm to the universe a macrocosm? That, most certainly, is no microcosm to something else a macrocosm which something else is in constitution in vital particular right the reverse of the thing in macrocosm.

Inq. As much as all this I should say myself.

Or. Very well ; but now to hark back, as we will say, for a moment to evolution proper again. Why must we not further in the light of that doctrine think consciousness not primary when it is *an axiom* of it *that only that primarily obtains which, only as it should primarily, can at all ;* and when consciousness would seem from the conditions of the event of it within our observation of them *to be no such thing that, to obtain at all, it must aboriginally obtain ?*

That is to say, it is only necessary that the *capacity* for consciousness at the outset exist that consciousness itself should, still that not in the beginning existing ; and it is only necessary, say, that the impact of something, and a certain something, on itself, itself at the same time having the power and impulse of its own for making of its own initiative the impact, prove the conditions of the event of consciousness that should obtain the capacity for the event in advance of the event itself ; that should, in other words, be void the any *necessity* of consciousness obtaining a thing primary

to obtain at all ; and as void the *necessity* then, in the light of the fundamental axiom, already stated, of the universe an evolution, void the *fact* of its obtaining a thing primary — it coming upon the scene only later and as a development ; a development as is everything not primary, as the universe is an evolution. Only this is necessary, I say, while that what are the terms of it should be, as would appear, only precisely what we so strikingly meet with in the event, and the like of it, of the consciousness and perception of light should leave us with us with no sort of reason doubting that consciousness may and does obtain independent of any necessity of primarily doing so to obtain at all. Thus to all appearance, the event of the consciousness or perception of light is contingent on that other event of the impact of the physical on itself, the impact of ether vibrations on eye and brain ; for we *never* know consciousness in *any* event of it but as following on the event of impact of the physical on itself ; *never* know it to obtain independent of that event of impact, tho perhaps not always have positive knowledge of its obtaining on that condition. Neither have

we at our wits' command *one scrap* of ratiocinative warrant why anything to the contrary should be assumed or even conjectured. So that, so far at least, the presumption is all in the direction of only the *capacity* for the consciousness or perception of light obtaining prior to the event of the impact of the physical on itself; only the capacity which that event of impact functions to convert into consciousness itself.

Then again in this particular event of consciousness, what to us is the physical making impact on itself is nothing more nor less than the One Only Absolute Reality final and inscrutable making impact on Itself, which yet entertaining only objectively, we recognize as the physical making it; and that making it being the Absolute Reality, it is that making it which nobody doubts has all the power whatsoever, is all the source whatsoever of all things whatsoever, and which therefore has, with the rest, all the power and impulse of its own for making of its own initiative the impact in question as ever it is made. And thus is fulfilled the only remaining condition wherefore all should be, of the capacity for conscious-

ness in advance of the event of it ; and wherefore should obtain *exhaustively* the presumption in the direction of that capacity. It is therefore, I say, something thoroly unreasonable, not to say absurd, to doubt consciousness being only secondary.

Besides, to emphasize this view, it is to be borne in mind that never has anyone conceived a situation, or ventured to claim to have conceived one, nor is it, I venture to say, *possible* to conceive one which could be a most lucid, perfect, and complete illustration of the capacity for consciousness in advance of consciousness itself, if the conditions, as we know them, under which we see and hear do not furnish it. Indeed, there would seem hardly even the doubt of evolution being true, of it itself, that consciousness is not primary, being true.

Inq. But it will be insisted still, that yet there is nothing in this line of thought pursued by you to dissipate altogether the bare possibility at least of consciousness occurring before, and independent of that event of the impact of the physical on itself ; and of that event being only an opportunity to let consciousness thru as might be a crack in the wall to let light thru.

Or. Yes, but with the presumption all against it, the insistence on that bare possibility is more than unreasonable, it is almost madness, — particularly when is considered that even were the bare possibility a certainty it would even then amount to nothing as anything in contradiction of what is the main proposition that consciousness is nothing fundamental. For even supposing still that that obtain on tap as it were behind the event of physical impact, yet even that would not make it a thing primary ; does not make it a thing behind everything altogether, which at least it is utterly and absolutely impossible, logically, for us to think it to be ; and even impossible, as we think of it at all, but as we positively think it *not* to be ; since, as I have before had occasion to remark, all that we know of it — and this we do most absolutely know of it — is as of an act or activity which, as still inconceivable but as the act or activity of *something*, something a substratum distinct from act or activity, is again at the same time inconceivable but as should that something, the act or activity of which was consciousness, be consciousness's *antecedent* ; and which as it is, then *something*

is antecedent to consciousness even if it be not the physical event of the impact of the physical on itself; *something* is antecedent; and that *something* is, is the real point, and the only real point in the contention.

So that to lay stress on what is only a bare possibility, even did it exist, is emphasis placed to no purpose, as placed on what is altogether beside the real question, and is worse than wasted. To do so is at best but to push the inevitable antecedent a step further back; it does not in the least get rid of it; but rather only invites the demonstration which has just had our attention, of the utter impossibility of doing so. That the antecedent is not the particular one of the impact of the physical on itself is comparatively unimportant; and yet, that we must think consciousness is anticipated by *something*, and by something *physical* too; — which the Absolute Reality as entertained objectively is, — renders it only the more probable, and shall we not say certain, that the impact of the physical on itself is *that something*; that something functioning as immediate and exciting cause to convert into consciousness itself what back

of it, and is that making the impact, is only capacity for it ; or is only, in other words, predisposing cause of it. The physical event of impact can figure only as immediate and exciting cause, and not as the cause altogether of consciousness, since that making the impact, and the cause of the impact are one and the same thing which, as is the case, it is that making the impact and not the impact itself which could be the cause altogether, tho remotely, of consciousness. Still, not *until* the event of impact, obtains that of consciousness itself.

But now as it were to add clincher to clincher, to pile Pelion on Ossa, and put still further, as were that possible, beyond all question that consciousness, that mind in general indeed, is nothing fundamental, and to attack the subject from another approach.

It surprised you a while ago that you, knowing you yourself to have consciousness and intellect, in brief mind, might not yet, as I said you might not, reason back to knowing your origin and cause to be itself mind.

Inq. It did, at least until I heard what you had to say about it.

Or. Yes ; but, — to return to the subject, — why should it ? Why, why has not the direct offspring of your own consciousness and intellect, the offspring, say, a watch of your invention and manufacture, why has not that watch itself consciousness and intellect ? Why ? — why, simply for the same reason that *YOUR OWN consciousness and intellect are not themselves* the offspring of consciousness and intellect. Knew you ever an instance of mind, simply mind, or even mind together with will and life to be directly the author of mind, or of will and life even ? Never. But you are familiar with ten thousand and a thousand times ten thousand instances of consciousness and intellect, or these together with will and life being directly the author of such as a watch, with never a trace therein of either consciousness, intellect, will, or life more than in the watch.

And now then, so long as in all the history of any mind of which we have positive knowledge there is no known exception to this being so, we have all the assurance, that is to say, have the *same* ground and *all* the ground precisely for assurance of the universality of the

fact of no exception that we have of the universality of law. More than this, having all this assurance we are in all reason holden to have all the confidence, and to accept with all the readiness the universality of that fact and of the unbroken history of the impotence of the mind to produce anything such as itself, — that is our wont in the matter of the universality of law. And if indeed there is no exception, then for an absolute certainty, and in truth self-evidently, there is *something more and other* than mind as also than will and life involved in mind's any reproduction as ever by whatsoever it is reproduced ; that is, as ever there is more original mind than ours of which ours is either a production or a reproduction. And if something more and other than mind and will and life, which is to say something which is *not* mind, *not* will, *not* life is involved in our mind's production, then it is *absolutely impossible* to escape the logical inference that that SAME something — what is *not* mind, and *not* will, and *not* life — is involved in *mind's first existence* ; and that mind's first existence is a production (a development in fact) and not a thing primary at all.

And thus on this quite another line of approach, we come to the same conclusion we already before had found altogether unavoidable; and to a conclusion only a confirmation of that before, save that that already beyond dispute, nothing can affect to confirm.

So that turn and turn again anyhow we will, and consciousness to *our* any possible thinking, possible *logical* thinking, is not the one thing before all things, nor even one with another or others before all. Even as ever it is an attribute or even a function, it is such only as first a development. And as of consciousness, so of mind in general, any mind at least of which we can have the least understanding, — there is nothing of it in “the beginning”; it obtains only later and as a development as does consciousness itself.

And this is all to say, that therefore it is nothing to the prejudice of the proposition that the final activity or energy obtains in modes the modes in (comparative) statu quo; and again in modes a change of mode, the latter the activity of the former, *and with which consciousness as identified must be understood as thing consequent to something antecedent to it, and nothing its primary.*

I 4

The Physical as Very Origin and Cause
of Consciousness

Inq. But then, too, a mode of energy the mode in statu quo which regarded objectively is matter, and antecedent to consciousness, the activity of which matter and the physical is to the effect, it is assumed, of consciousness itself, — *is matter and the physical actually*, as it would appear, *even very the origin and cause* of consciousness.

Or. Yes, truly enough, if we will but at the same time not forget that if matter is, so is soul or spirit; for matter, we understand, is only the same thing looked at one way which, regarded another, is soul or spirit.

Inq. I know; and not forgetting that, the physical would yet appear to be very the origin and cause of consciousness — at least as much so as is soul or spirit.

Or. That is exactly so; and, still, neither matter nor soul or spirit, *as such*, — as the view is taken of them just indicated, — is an entity

at all; and so neither of them, *as such*, can be the origin and cause of anything. It is only as both are *something*, something at least and simply, as a while ago I showed they must be, and the *same* something, — only as they are this is it that they could be origin and cause at all, and of consciousness, if so even then. It is only — to revert to our illustration of the billiard ball and ring — as the ring is *something*, and that something the billiard ball as that is something independent of the mind, that such as the impact of the ring on anything could be with any positive result. And so now, it is only as matter and soul or spirit are *something*, something absolute, absolute again as being independent of the mind, — as is the something which the ring is, — and the *same* something, that they could be the origin and cause of consciousness. But as being that something, something absolute, absolute as being independent of mind, whatever more they are, as being that, and that in its turn being one with the one only something absolute itself of which we have any knowledge or even hint, namely, the One Only and Inscrutable Absolute the foundation

of the universe, it follows that soul or spirit and the physical could be, yes, even the physical could be, as veritably that *something* the origin and cause of consciousness as ever the One Only and Inscrutable Absolute was.

Inq. And so it is what we *recognize* as the physical and matter, whether it be that as we recognize it or not, which as making impact on itself could be very the origin and cause of consciousness as ever the One Only and Inscrutable Absolute Reality could be.

Or. Yes, and there is no getting away from it either.

Inq. But is, indeed, *anything*, is even the One Only and Inscrutable Absolute Reality, recognized as we recognize the physical and matter, is even that that origin and cause?

Or. Well, is it likely, is it in reason, that whatsoever not fundamental should be itself its own origin and cause? Could anything to *our* understanding seem more self-evident or axiomatic than that that which is aboriginal should be author of that which was not?—and particularly when the primary and subsequent are constantly reappearing in the relation of what would seem that of cause and

effect, and the subsequent never known to obtain independent of what would seem that relation?

Inq. I confess, I should hardly think there could. And understanding the physical, as you put it, to be but the Absolute Reality in disguise, the Absolute Reality as it should appear to us as entertained by us objectively, it is easy enough to credit it with being the origin and cause of consciousness as ever anything was. But the physical as usually understood, something so radically and absolutely distinct and different from, and it would seem even almost the very opposite of, consciousness, — that such should be the spring of it I have felt to be altogether incredible.

Or. But why any less so that the Absolute Reality should be? If you did but know it, you are not in the least relieved of your difficulty on the score you name. For the Absolute Reality Itself in constitution affords all the contrast, every whit, and a more certain one, with consciousness than does, as vulgarly viewed, the physical. This is self-evident enough when is considered that that Reality is *self-existent*, and anything of which It should

be the origin and cause would be but the *dependently-existent*, between which, the self-existent, as such, and the dependently-existent, as such, the contrast is, shall we not say, nothing less than infinite. And is the contrast of the physical itself with consciousness more than infinite? — is it even ever dreamed to be more? And if you must stagger at such as the physical being the spring of consciousness because of the great gulf fixed, as so would appear, between the one and the other, then, as you would be consistent, as the Absolute Reality is that spring, you must stagger still because of the great gulf fixed between that and the dependently-existent which is more than one which only appears, for it is one of unequivocal certainty.

It will not do to say that it is more easily conceivable that an infinite self-existent vague Absolute Reality should be the author of consciousness, for that is entirely beside the point. Besides, the physical might be self-existent, or might be even infinite, for that matter. The point is — *that appalling contrast*, and one an *absolute certainty* between the self-existent and the contingently-existent, whatever it may

seem between the physical and consciousness ; that appalling contrast such that all this talk we have heard all our days about ourselves being made in the image of our creator proves unmitigated rubbish — the contingently-existent obtaining in the image of the self-existent being simply *absolutely impossible*. And in truth it is only to be viewed an axiom of things that self-existent cause and contingently-existent effect are of utterly distinct categories, as much so as are a ball and its motion, or a clock and its going or the time kept by its going ; categories that by dint of no ingenuity of logic can we, from knowing such cause's effect, reason back to knowing the cause itself, any more than in the illustration of the ball and the ring could we reason back to knowing whether indeed that in motion was sphere or cube or what. And it is this so obvious, absolute and certain a contrast, I say, between the self-existent and the conditionally-existent beside the less certain and less obvious between the physical and consciousness, which is the real point ; and wherefore if one should be dazed in view of the one being the origin and cause of consciousness, he should in all con-

sistency be even quite altogether stunned in view of the other being so. But *is* he — are *you* quite stunned altogether with the more absolute and profounder contrast? If not, where is your consistency?

Inq. And indeed I was busy hunting it up. But it must be confessed we are not always sensible of our inconsistencies.

Or. No. But in fact, you cannot have *anything* of which something was the author but that that something as it was *at last* the author, and the real such, shall be of a radically and totally distinct category from that of which it is the origin and cause. Why, do you suppose even that a hen is the author of the egg she lays, and thus herself, of another hen?

Inq. I had always supposed she was.

Or. Well, she isn't. If she were, *it would involve that the first hen was author of the first hen's egg*, that is, the first egg from which a hen or chick emerged, — which no biologist, certainly no biologist an evolutionist, would for a moment contend or even allow; *and what was the author of the first hen's egg is the author of every egg which the hen*

lays, the every egg laid since that first ; and of course of the every hen laying an egg.

Inq. And that author or origin and cause of the first hen's egg — what was that ?

Or. Why, was what was *not* a hen, to be sure — or what a hen is not. And as what is not a hen or what a hen is not, was the origin and cause of that first hen's egg and first hen, so, again, what is *not* what would appear the immediate antecedent of that first hen — or what that antecedent is not — is itself indeed *the author of that antecedent*, and so on indefinitely until we bring up with a last such antecedent of which the author is the *self-existent*, and so of which nothing is origin and cause. It is the one and same thing, the self-existent, author in continuity of all hens' eggs and all hens ; and the *immediate*, too, and not simply the remote author as is generally the view. What a hen together with her environment is author of at the most are characteristics of the seeming offspring not shared in by the seeming parent. For the rest, the hen functions only for host for the protection and procession of the processes of nutrition and development of incipient life, life for which *she* is not responsible. But now from the very

fact that the author of the last immediate antecedent is self-existent while the first hen's egg and first hen and their long line of antecedents are only the dependently-existent, compels that that which is origin and cause and the self-existent should be radically and absolutely of another and distinct category. And can you imagine one thing more distinctly and profoundly different from another than is a thing that exists of itself and one which depends for its existence on another? So that the physical as the spring of consciousness is not alone in contrasting so appallingly with that of which it might be origin and cause. And to return, I ask again where is your consistency in being overcome in view of the instance of it which has so much exercised you?

Inq. But my consistency aside. It is not, as the physical is contemplated the origin and cause of consciousness, the matter of contrast in kind simply, and one of the two contrasting kinds the spring of the other which has taxed my credulity; but contrast of *such* kinds as confronted me, that of an inferior and a superior and the inferior the spring of the superior, — it is this that has undone me.

"How can the fountain rise higher than its source?"—as is the familiar form of urging it. How could consciousness (or mind in general) if that be superior to everything else obtain in the creature and not in the creator? This is the mystery over all, and yet you have not hinted of it.

Or. No; and because the cry is too foolish for notice. It was of little account as the universe was a creation; it is of none at all as that is an evolution. But now a word touching it, as you have called it up.

Those in the past who have attempted to make much of it, and those who still would, are precisely the same minds who will remind you that Final Being, or Being of God as they conceive it, is utterly inscrutable, and then straightway proceed to tell you all about it, all about what they have just declared inscrutable, unsearchable, and so on! That is, they are minds of a class and of a training and of mental habit to be abashed at no amount of either assumption or logical inconsistency. Consciousness and mind in general is with them, as with the rest of us, the nearest to them of anything they know; and that of which they know more than of anything else;

and is what is superior to anything with which they are familiar ; and they simply assume, they do not argue it as it does not admit of that, simply assume it superior to everything altogether ; to everything even to what they are fond of declaring the inscrutable, and of which one would suppose they therefore knew nothing, and could tell nothing whether it was superior to or not. But this, that consciousness or mind in general is superior to everything altogether does not in the least follow, and is not true ; and indeed and indeed how *could* it, how could it *possibly* be true ? You and I and the mind and consciousness and all and all that we are, if only the contingently-existent, as it is assumed, how possibly could that, or anything of that, even our mind and consciousness, be superior to the *self*-existent ? Nobody doubts the one, and who doubts the other ? But that the self-existent is self-existent, that fact by itself and alone, makes it radically and absolutely both different in very kind and in very kind superior to everything that should be only dependently-existent ; radically different from and superior to everything even to what with us is *our* superior, namely, our mind and consciousness, — which only as

it is is it different in kind, and in kind superior to everything of the only contingently-existent. And how is it thus different and superior to mind and consciousness but as it is so in respects in which it is *not* such? What is not mind and consciousness then, or at least *something* that is not, is superior to what *is*, — yet that should be utterly incomprehensible to us what that is which is, and which, incomprehensible, how should not that be which was inscrutable, “unsearchable,” and what “no man shall see the face of and live.”

So that it is not the inferior that is the author of the superior, but the superior and the superior *because it is not mind and consciousness*, that is author of the inferior and the inferior because it *is* that. And thus it comes to this, that the situation, after all, is not one of the fountain rising higher than its source, but only one of a false estimate of the relative height of what is the fountain.

Inq. I grant what you say to be the more rational view.

Or. Well now, the sum of our reflections on the subject amounts to about this: that there is nothing more certain outside the certainty of consciousness itself than that the

physical — *that is, than that what as entertained by us objectively is the physical* — functions as the origin and cause of consciousness ; nothing more certain, again, than that what, and what only, obtains back of the event of impact of what to our recognition is the physical on itself is *capacity* for consciousness, not consciousness itself ; that is, in other words, that not *until* the event of the impact of the Absolute Reality on Itself, knows even that Reality Itself anything of consciousness ; and nothing more certain, still again, than that that Absolute Reality with which the capacity for consciousness is lodged is of an as utterly distinct category from that of consciousness itself, as that of a ball is from that of its motion, or that of a clock from its going or the time kept by its going.

It is therefore nothing to the prejudice of the physical, not even to the physical as it might be that, as such, as that origin and cause, that it is of the grievous contrast it would appear to be with consciousness itself.

Inq. And thus it would appear that consciousness is not an attribute of anything ; or at least not such save as it is first a development.

Or. True. And, moreover, with it first a development before ever an attribute, it follows that the Absolute Reality must have *already* been heading, have *already* gotten well under way for the manifest universe before consciousness once ever appeared upon the scene; so that the dictum by an eminent psychologist that "evolution to work smoothly, consciousness in some shape must have been present at the very origin of things" is one without a shadow of warrant, the contrary having all the warrant in the world short of a mathematical demonstration.

Inq. But how would it be as consciousness were a function of the mind?

Or. But it is absurd to talk about consciousness being a function of the mind, anyway. It is absurd that that should be the function of a thing which itself the thing had had no existence but for that function — unless, forsooth, the function is author of that of which it is the function. Mind, so far as we know anything about it, is grounded in consciousness. Of unconscious mind which was not first mind conscious we know absolutely nothing, as I have before duly emphasized. Of *capacity* for mind before consciousness we

may know something ; but of mind before — nothing. And, of course, the absurdity of the foundation of a superstructure being as it were the superstructure's function is only too manifest.

Inq. Now, all that you have said would seem clear enough ; and all the clearer for the pains you are so often at, in speaking of the physical as back of and the spring of consciousness, to say that it is the physical, *or what at least as entertained in consciousness objectively is the physical*, that is so ; to say that it is that as *something*, if not that, as such, that is. It is clearer since, otherwise, one might be disposed to ask of you a solution of a paradox ; ask you how it is that the physical which is physical only as a somewhat is entertained in consciousness objectively is back of and the cause of that (consciousness) only as in which (consciousness) is the somewhat objectively entertained is it the physical at all, or is there a physical at all ? In other words, ask you how it is that that is back of consciousness and its spring which has no existence until *after* consciousness ?

Or. Yes ; but as it is, you understand.

Inq. Perfectly ; all is clear enough.

15

Life and Consciousness Only What
as Entertained Objectively is
Physical Force

Inq. You have said that a mode of energy the mode a change of mode what is the activity of a mode in statu quo, is, as objectively entertained in consciousness, what we recognize as physical force; but which, as subjectively entertained, is what we are aware of as consciousness.

Or. Yes, — that is, as ever we are aware of consciousness at all, it is what as entertained objectively would be recognized as physical force. But not always is that which as thus entertained is physical force, recognized, when entertained subjectively, as consciousness; it will sometimes be recognized as life only.

Inq. Then both life and consciousness are what as entertained objectively is known as physical force.

Or. Yes, and both are a mode a change

of mode of energy. Both obtain in the critical moment of one mode in statu quo breaking with itself to assume another in statu quo again, — and what would *almost* seem the liberation of energy, for that moment, from *all* mode. Both obtain at such time, and only in the event of the impact of the Absolute Reality on Itself, or what to our cognition or immediate understanding is the physical on itself.

Inq. And as this was so, what then would you say is the difference between the two?

Or. I would say that it, as objectively occupying the mind, is a difference much a parallel, in one respect at least, of that between a simple sound or noise and a musical tone; a difference, namely, of rapidity of succession of modes a change of mode of activity or energy as the difference of rapidity of succession of distinct sounds or noises constitutes, for one thing, the difference between a simple sound or noise and a tone in music; the more rapid succession constituting consciousness as the more rapid does the musical tone.

But what is a parallelism of the *similarity* both between life and consciousness as sensed

by us as things in continuity ; and again between both these and a musical tone as sensed by us as a thing in continuity, — is even more impressive ; and the more so in that, in the one case as in the other, it is, in part at least, *our inability to distinguish the intervals between distinct events, owing to the rapidity of their succession* ; and wherefore we take life and consciousness to be things in continuity as we do a tone in music.

16

Life, Consciousness, Self, and I or Ego
Not Things in Continuity

Or. To repeat, — life and consciousness if in *appearance* entities in continuity, that is, if so sensed, are so *only* in appearance, as, in reality, they each are made up of a rapid succession of altogether distinct, sudden, and instantaneous events, those events changes of mode of activity or energy, which subjectively consciousness fails to detect the intervals between.

Life is thus made up of a rapid succession of extremely minute explosions as it were, each to the effect of life; explosions consequent upon the impact of what appears to be the physical on itself, but of what is, in fact, the Absolute Reality on Itself; and between which discreet explosions, the consciousness fails to realize the intervals. And the same is to be said of consciousness itself, only that the series of discreet minute life events, as

then succeeding one another far more rapidly than those of life, are attended each by *another* event, a *flash* as it were, *of consciousness*; but the flashes succeeding one another with so great rapidity that their *sum, the consciousness with which we are familiar*, fails to realize itself *as such sum*.

But now then, if life and consciousness are not things in continuity, as would appear, neither is the "self" in "self"-consciousness," and the I or ego with which we are familiar, which, they too, are made up of the discreet selves and I's or egos each synchronous and conterminous, as obtaining at all, with each distinct event or flash of consciousness of which the consciousness with which we are familiar is constituted; these distinct selves and I's or egos themselves obtaining in rapid succession *pari passu* with the distinct events, the distinct flashes so to speak, of consciousness with which the selves and I's or egos are contemporaneous and conterminous.

Thus, the color red, for example, is constituted of 392 billions of ether vibrations per second. This means that there are that number of impacts per second on eye and brain;

and as many distinct events or flashes of consciousness per second; and, again, as many distinct instances of the self and I or ego obtaining per second; but means, too, the distinct events or flashes of consciousness following one another, and the distinct instances obtaining of the self and I or ego following one another, also, in such rapid succession that the consciousness, the sum of its own flashes which appears itself to be one thing in continuity, fails to detect the intervals between them; and wherefore they severally appear things in continuity when they are not.

And so it would seem, and which is to be noted, that right have been, yes right, those philosophers or critics in philosophy who have maintained that neither consciousness itself nor the "self" and I or ego of self-consciousness is a thing in continuity. They were right as they insisted that such continuity was an illusion — which it is; tho they had not quite at their hand the philosophy in explanation of the matter which it is here ventured to maintain.

17

No Direct Realization of Life or Consciousness Beyond our Own

Or. I was particular to say, life and consciousness as sensed *by us*; for, as there is what we understand as objective sound so low, that is, so moderate the rate of succession, such the length, of the undulations of air; and other objective sound so high, that is, again, so rapid the rate of succession, such the brevity, of the waves or vibrations, that the ear is not adapted to respond to them and we therefore are unable to hear them; so there are other objective life and objective consciousness so low, that is, so moderate the rate of succession of the modes a change of mode of energy, and still other objective life and objective consciousness so high, that is, again, so rapid the rate of succession of those modes that we are not mentally constituted, in our present development, to respond to them, and thus have

a direct consciousness of the one as life, or of the other as consciousness. And, in fact, should objective life be as universal as are modes a change of mode of activity or energy, that which is the activity of matter, which activity likely is as universal as is matter itself, — and objective life at least might be, tho objective consciousness, since it is a more rapid rate of succession of such modes than is life, could not be ; — I say, should objective life be thus universal, we ourselves most certainly must fall almost infinitely short of sensing *subjectively and directly* the whole realm of objective life ; almost infinitely short of sensing it *as life*. Indeed, we *thus* sense the objective life, only that, of our own bodies, such life outside them we having only objective cognizance of with dependence for that on objective and physical signs which, as might these be absent, as they often are, not even that objective cognizance have we at all of objective life *as life*. The obscure life, if life it be, of a stone, for example, — what cognizance objective even, to say nothing of any subjective and direct, have we of it? Who

thinks to speak of the life of a stone? Or, again, the life, if life it be, of a chemical reaction outside living things — what objective knowledge have we of that, of it as life, to say nothing of any subjective realization of it as life?

18

Paradox

Inq. But now you have said that mind, that consciousness, is such as a mode a change of mode of energy is entertained in consciousness subjectively. Yet this would be to have understood — what would seem paradoxical enough — that consciousness is consciousness only as somewhat is entertained in what (consciousness) has no existence *until* thus entertained ! But how is that, which is consciousness only as it should be subjectively entertained, to be thus entertained in what (consciousness) has no existence *until* thus entertained ?

Or. In no way possible, of course, — that is, in no way as consciousness was assumed to be such *only* as thus entertained ; which, however, is not at all assumed. On the contrary, quite the opposite is to be understood, — as has already been pointed out, — and that, primarily, what is a mode of energy a change of

mode is, whenever consciousness obtains at all, to the effect of consciousness absolutely; absolutely, that is, as being independent of being entertained in consciousness subjectively in order that it should be consciousness — which *also* it (consciousness) is, tho not *therefore* is, as it should be entertained subjectively in itself.

Once this understood, and all seeming paradox, or absurdity, vanishes.

Inq. Then, the situation is that it is consciousness itself — or that at least as it would appear to be — which subjectively entertained *in itself* is consciousness *still*; so that all the difference between consciousness and some particular form or order, or all forms or orders of physical force is that between what, as it should occupy consciousness subjectively, would be consciousness, but which as it might be entertained objectively would be recognized as physical force.

Or. That is it.

19

Is Consciousness Universal?

Inq. You say, all the difference between consciousness and some particular form or order, or all forms or orders of physical force is so and so ; but which is it, some particular form or order, or all ?

Or. One must a little doubt that it is all. And indeed if the ground of discrimination assumed a while ago between life and consciousness be valid, it would appear certain that it is not all. However, as it were all, it might be well in passing to remark that, supposing consciousness as universal as a mode of energy a change of mode, then brain (or soul) does not function as origin and cause of consciousness itself, but only as affording a sense of the *oneness*, so to speak, of so much of it as falls to us, and as determining the *contents* of that much, contents *such* as they are as bound and hedged about by finite, human, and cerebral limitations.

However, as I said to start with, that consciousness is thus universal is hardly probable ; rather, it is decidedly improbable.

Inq. But just to suppose it were, might not there then be said to obtain even yet such as the "Being of God" ?

Or. No. First because consciousness, a *sine qua non* of such Being, is not the only *sine qua non* thereof, there being others only as which obtain does such Being Itself in the least obtain. And no, again, because if it is only a product or development, as I have been contending, then it is nothing primary ; and as nothing primary it could be nothing of such Being who is understood to be what is altogether that. And then still again, no, because, as nothing primary, it could not figure as anything causal or as even factor of what was causal of all things, as again is understood of that Being. And still once more and finally, no, because the any universal consciousness in question, coming as it does only after the physical, is not of a content of *things*, present, past, and to come, but of content only of the *life* of things ; the same as it is only

of the *life* of the bodily organs, corpuscles, and tissues, and not these themselves, of which you and I are directly, that is to say subjectively, conscious, — quite the contrary as is assumed of the Being of God the content of whose consciousness is understood to include all things whatsoever as well as their life.

20

Why not Conscious of Universal Consciousness should such obtain

Inq. But now then, as consciousness accompanied any physical force at all outside animal life, accompanied even, say, any chemical reaction outside, such as the conversion of oxygen and hydrogen into water, or the slow oxidation of a bit of iron, how should I not directly know of it; how not be directly aware of it, and aware of it as associated with that chemical reaction?

Or. Well, how is it that you are not directly sensible of *my* consciousness, mine which goes with more or less of the physical activity of my brain, the chemical reactions of which are to the effect of, if not the cause of my consciousness, — how should you not directly know of that? — how not be directly sensible of the consciousness attending *those* chemical reactions?

Inq. Yes, but I do at least know of it,

know of the consciousness attending those chemical reactions, even if only indirectly by physical signs ; but not even by these do I know and indirectly of consciousness attending chemical reactions occurring outside the living animal body.

Or. But you might not always be even indirectly aware of my own, for the physical signs might not be present still that consciousness might obtain ; as men often are conscious, as the sequel proves, still that at the time they could make no sign, and it could not be determined until afterwards whether they were or not. So, that the absence of physical signs is no evidence of the absence of consciousness. And yet that you cannot, anyway, directly know of my own, which is to say be conscious of the consciousness attending the chemical reactions of my brain, and may not from the possible absence of all physical signs even indirectly know of it, tho, indeed, I may be altogether conscious, you still are affected with surprise that such as the chemical reactions in the event of the conversion, outside the animal body, of oxygen and hydrogen into water should be accompanied by consciousness,

and you not have direct consciousness of that consciousness, nor even at least indirect knowledge of it! This all, mind you, is not to say, as I would be far from saying, and as we can hardly in reason suppose, that every such reaction whatsoever is thus attended; but only that if it were, why should you be taken by surprise at not being aware of it directly, or even indirectly? That, however, there is consciousness attending *some* chemical reactions outside the animal body, there is reason in believing.

2 I

How Signalized in Consciousness Modes of Energy in statu quo as Matter as Brain?—and How as Brain as Matter?

Inq. We are to understand, then, that there are modes of activity or energy the modes in (comparative) statu quo; and, again, other modes each a mode a change of mode, these the activity of the former; and that matter is an instance of the former, and physical force of the latter, as consciousness is occupied with them objectively; and soul or spirit an instance of the former, and consciousness (or mind in general) of the latter as it is occupied with them subjectively.

Or. Yes.

Inq. Moreover, we are to understand that as the arbitrary discrimination was to be indulged in of soul exclusively one thing, and spirit exclusively quite another, it might be the particular ensemble of modes in statu quo

involved in what as occupying consciousness objectively is recognized as brain which, as occupying it subjectively, should be contemplated as soul; when, as it was, the same ensemble of modes, with all other modes in statu quo whatsoever, which, entertained objectively are recognized as matter simply, matter in general, would, as subjectively entertained be contemplated as spirit.

Or. Even so. But let it pass for what only it was meant — a fanciful suggestion which yet in this connection might be needed.

Inq. But what now I would like to know is, how the realization subjectively of what as objectively recognized as matter as brain (or brain and body), and as active, is signalized in consciousness?

Or. How? Why, by the awareness of a *presence*; a finite presence, and realized as one's possession; and which the religious devotee translates in the vernacular of his faith into soul, and *his* soul.

Inq. And how signalized the subjective realization of what as objectively recognized is matter, matter as matter, matter in general

simply, — how, the subjective realization even of what as objectively recognized as brain as it was brain as matter simply?

Or. Signalized as is realized in consciousness a *cosmic* presence; a presence recognized subjectively to be as limitless compared with that of one's soul as is recognized objectively matter as matter to be compared with matter as brain; and which cosmic presence the subject of it understands, when not as a cosmic presence simply, then, in his ignorance or stupidity, as the presence even that of very the Being and consciousness of what to his understanding is "God" Himself.

22

No Direct Consciousness of Such as the
Being of God

Inq. Why say, "In one's ignorance or stupidity"? Might it not be truly the presence of such Being, assuming such to obtain?

Or. Not in the least. And only ignorance, I repeat, or stupidity could feel assurance that it was; and simply because we have no more reason to suppose such seeming conscious presence an entity outstanding the human mind, simply because we conceive it to be, than we have to suppose visual light to be from its delivering itself to be, and which we know positively it is not. We at best only rightfully infer that *something* outstanding we have brought up against, as we do when we have perception of light; but that against which we do bring up and is outstanding is, as we have cosmic consciousness, nothing itself we more have a consciousness of than we

have of *ether vibrations* as we have perception of light.

In other words, the cosmic consciousness which falls betimes to some or all of us is simply as in the instance of consciousness of visual light, the result, as only in all logical consistency can we suppose, of mental faculty quickened of the action on it of the physical; and of the physical in the form of molecular agitation, even possibly vibrations; but of those more general, if not universal in a way, than those involved in the ordinary mental activities.

For, what logical business have we to assume consciousness to obtain under other fundamental conditions, having once known it to do so under such as just named — or what business, save only as under the most positively determined other circumstances it may be shown to do so? Or what business to assume in any case *that* of which there is consciousness, to be anything less or other than, as in other instances, a mental resultant or product which the mind *lodges* with an entity outstanding, but which no more, in fact, *inheres* in an entity outstanding than does visual light, as

such, and which the mind confounds with that actually outstanding, ether vibrations, *inhere* in those vibrations?

Inq. You mean to say, in short, that cosmic consciousness is only the subjective consciousness to an objective consciousness in which the subjective no more inheres than inheres the color green — the subjective consciousness to the objective, that objective consciousness certain ether vibrations — in those ether vibrations.

Or. Yes.

Inq. But the more widely diffused form of the physical, say, more widely diffused form of vibrations — as must be those of oxygen or hydrogen, for example, than those of any *compound* of either, like water (OH^2) for instance — and those possibly and presumptively more ample, must be those of matter as matter; but how should any such as these obtain within the confines of the brain, and to act on it to provoke the larger consciousness? — how obtain where are those less diffused and less ample, and which, only that they are so, are those of brain?

Or. How? Why, in the same way that

you may have within the same spatial limits the movement of the stream and of that of the eddy of the stream ; or may have within the same field the fundamental musical note and, too, its overtones ; the movement of the eddy being, or of the overtones being, matter as brain ; and that of the stream itself, or of the fundamental note itself, being brain as matter rather than matter as brain — brain as matter, that is, matter in general. And no more than becomes the stream extinct because of the eddy, or the fundamental note because of the overtones, are the more widely diffused and ample vibrations, those of matter in general, need we suppose, snuffed out because obtaining those less diffused and less ample, and which should be those of matter as brain. And if vibrations at large are still there, yet that are there, too, those such as constitute brain, they are there to act on and be reacted on by mental faculty as much as were they altogether outside the brain's uttermost confine.

Inq. What, in brief, you would have me understand is that the consciousness of a somewhat in cosmic consciousness no more implies

a consciousness of the presence of the "Being of God," supposing there to be such, than the consciousness of visual light implies a consciousness of ether vibrations ?

Or. Well, yes ; any other view is only to outrage all logical consistency. It is only childish minds and childish ignorance that jump to the conclusion that in cosmic consciousness there is consciousness of very an outlying independent consciousness ; as it is, too, only minds of no sense of logical consistency which will *assume* consciousness to obtain under other fundamental conditions than it is known to obtain under. .

Inq. But might not at least a still even higher development of human faculty than is implied in cosmic consciousness lay verily directly hold on independent and universal consciousness, if any such there be, and what were to be supposed, perhaps, that of the Being of God, assuming such Being to obtain ?

Or. No, this is absolutely impossible of logical belief. I say *logical* belief ; for men can simply believe almost anything which it pleases them to believe ; believe without reason or against all reason — which is about as they

generally do believe. But they cannot *logically* believe that they can realize across one break when they well know that they cannot across another and similar one. What I mean by this is, that each knows that another's consciousness is not his own in continuity — not in direct continuity at least — knows that there is a hiatus between one's own and another's, in a word ; and that he cannot know directly of another's, and can know of it only indirectly, being wholly dependent on physical signs even then.

Now, knowing that they cannot directly know, that is, realize, across a break in consciousness in this instance, they cannot *logically* believe they can across one in any instance whatever ; save only, of course, on the most positive and unimpeachable proof to the contrary. If, then, there is that hiatus or break between our own and any universal or, as it should happen to be, Being of God's consciousness, it is absolutely impossible of *logical* belief that even any higher mental development of ours should enable us to realize across it, and we once ever be directly conscious of any universal consciousness, be it that simply, or

be it very the consciousness of "God" Himself — impossible, so long as we are unable to be directly conscious of one another.

Besides, cosmic consciousness is little more than cosmic emotion, anyway. It never in the moment of it seems articulate with some new truth or truths, some fresh discovery, or great invention — as would seem inevitable as it connoted an outlying independent consciousness, particularly as it connoted very such as the Being of God, connoted consciousness of content such as that usually understood to be content of such Being.

23

Is ours a Universal Consciousness in
Continuity?

Inq. But then might not ours be the any universal consciousness in continuity? — might, indeed, there be *no* hiatus or break between that and ours? — might not ours be at least like the eddy of the stream, one with the general current, only the general current with, perhaps, a twist in it, as it were?

Or. Possibly; but the twist in it could but be fatal to its ever realizing other consciousness than such as itself; that is, than consciousness with a twist in it; which is to say, fatal to its ever realizing any such as is universal which is consciousness without any such twist; and so, as fatal to any such realization as would be a break in the continuity itself. Commotion of the water of a stream has only for its effect the distortion — when not the obliteration — of all reflections of objects in

its surface. And so the wrench given to the any universal consciousness to become only finite could have for its only effect the distortion, when not the obliteration, of all reflections of absolute truth in it. And we have no reason to suppose our own consciousness any better than such as should be universal with that wrench or twist given it.

24

The World Within an Illusion as is
That Without

Inq. But, now, you have said that our any experience of cosmic consciousness is one no more of a consciousness outstanding and independent of our own mind and brain than is visual light such. This is much as to say — since it would seem the direct delivery in consciousness that it is more — that such delivery is as misleading, as consciousness is knowingly subjectively occupied as when objectively it is ; — but is it ?

Or. Well, why not ? — or, rather, why not in all reason we suppose and assume it to be ? In every instance where it affects to deliver in percept or concept as to reality beyond, and where reliability of such deliverance is open to the test of experimentation and verification, the direct deliverance has always been proven to be false ; to be even the very opposite of

the truth altogether. What is it, then, but downright idiocy to even dream that it ever delivers otherwise? — to dream it delivers otherwise, as the attention is directed inward, when it does not as directed outward? It delivers visual light as an outstanding independent entity, which we know to be the very opposite of the truth as science has proven it to be; delivers green to be in the grass, which again we know to be contrary to the facts in the case, and that but for the eye, brain, and mind there would be no green even in appearance there, — and so on to the end of the endless chapter of apparent external realities. Why, then, when it affects to deliver as to *internal* realities *beyond* percept or concept *as such merely*, should we not in all reason and logical consistency suppose and assume it, again, to outrage the truth; and that again only the very opposite of its deliverance consists with what is true? Why not, rather, when, for instance, it delivers the “self” contemplated in self-consciousness as referring to or as being identical with a conscious entity, expect and assume that “self” to do or be

nothing as delivered at all? Why not recognize "self" as but a pawn in the game, one of consciousness's own conjuring, and with which it itself juggles to its own deception, — why not? And so the same as to such as final cause, subject and object, and the rest as these affect to affirm outstanding reality, — why not? That consciousness brings up with percept, concept, and what not, as such, merely, brings up with them as something as it were of its own coinage, and never as realizing over that fence, unable even to conjecture what is beyond, is what every intelligent and well-informed mind allows in general; and yet allows in general, only fiercely to deny in the particular of its being so as the mind is turned *inward*. But why the exception? In sensuous perception, the faculty, soul, or what not, in virtue of which the consciousness involved obtains, is a *constructive* organ which functions, which sees, only *constructively*. And shall we believe with any reason or consistency that, instantaneously, with the attention turned inward, what is a *constructive* organ undergoes a *revulsion and revolution* in

its nature and function, and sees *not* constructively but straight from the shoulder, as it were, to the thing itself and as it is in itself? But this is just what everyone assumes to happen who assumes that the moment the attention is directed inward, the mind or consciousness delivers altogether inerrantly. So I ask again — why the exception? What warrant for the gross outrage of the logical reason?

25

Always Objective Thought when Subjective Thought

Inq. Doubtless those who assume greater integrity of deliverance as the attention is directed inward, do so thinking that then they bring up against what is only mind, instead of, primarily, against still what is the physical with mind only an adjunct or after-clap, as is the case when the attention is directed outward; do so, thinking even that what, whether percept, concept, or whatsoever, occupies consciousness distinct from what occupies it as the attention is directed outward, is coined directly out of the mind or consciousness itself alone; is coined by the mental itself out of the mental itself altogether without taint of the any fancied humiliation of contingency on the physical; and must wherefore be "straight goods," as the street phrase is.

Or. Yes, but with what reason? Why fancy that then, suddenly, the mind which

faces and the mind which is faced is mind which, if not primarily originating independent of the physical, still now at last *persists* independent of it; persists like the blown soap-bubble, utterly emancipated clear of its origin, altogether unencumbered longer of any entanglement or relation with the physical, as is the soap-bubble, once blown, emancipated clear of its origin and the force that blew it, as it cuts loose and floats transcendently away? I say, why assume that it persists thus free and independent; and assume even that it then buds and blossoms of its own initiative with fresh percepts and concepts quite as transcendently of the physical as is at least conceivable other soap-bubbles emerging out of the original bubble, or out of each other independently of origin from the original bubble? Why? — only that it is so hard for men to break with the notion that mind is somehow first or last a free and independent entity; and itself the author of free and independent entities, entities even themselves free and independent of everything but mind as mind is, as they imagine it, of everything altogether?

And yet, it is a physical fact behind, or at least allied with, the spiritual fact in the only instances that we know positively what is behind or allied with the spiritual fact ; instances such as our own seeing, hearing, and the like ; that is, instances that cover in our own realization of the whole world of apparent external realities. What business, then, what business as one would be logically consistent I mean, has anyone to assume it *ever* to be otherwise, and to be so in the instances we do *not* know positively about ? What business have we, in other words, to assume as ever *once* there is objective thought, and that something of the physical and complement of thought as it is subjective, subjective, that is, as it is in our consciousness, — that there is not *always* objective thought and it something of the physical — always as often as there is thought at all ?

And, bear in mind, it is not enough that we are unable to observe, or to prove, in any other particular instance, the physical allied with the mental, and therefore warranted in doubting its being there still ; but that we may doubt it *only as there is the most positive*

evidence amounting to the most indisputable proof to the contrary. What is the logical presumption has "the right of way"—it must not be forgotten; and only the most indubitable demonstration of a contrary proposition is to be recognized as standing for a moment against it. The fact, then, which, in all reason, we must accept is that there is objective thought, and it something of the physical, as ever there is what we are directly conscious of as subjective thought; that there is, equally as the most abstract concept is being evolved or entertained, or as is the most sensuous percept; equally as the mind is turned inward or when turned outward.

26

Why Objective Thought (Objective
Thought or Objective Association
of Ideas) not always Verifiable

Inq. I do not quite comprehend what you mean by unable to observe or to prove.

Or. Well, when we have certain outlying ether vibrations reflected from a farm and entering the eye to be reacted on by it, or by it transferred to a certain cortical area in the back of the brain and to be reacted on by that and to the effect of a physical resultant, vibratory or other, accompanied by the perception of the farm, but not of the landscape or beauty of the farm, to have which we must have, as we must suppose, a reflection of that physical resultant from the first cortical area to a second whose function it is to discover the landscape or beauty of the farm,—or, perhaps, even to form or entertain a concept of the beautiful in the abstract—as it was the function of the first to discover the farm ;

— I say when we have this, can we *observe* that *primary* physical resultant making impact on that *second* cortical area? — or, either, have we access to the living active brain to enable us by any sort of laboratory experiment to *verify* what, still, the dictum of the logical reason declares is obtaining or taking place?

Or then again, when we have, as possibly in clairvoyance we have, perception of physical objects thru solid walls and a hundred miles away, and the clairvoyant sees in virtue of the X or other occult ray making impact directly on some region of the brain without the intermediary of an external organ, organ external like the physical eye or ear — as indeed, without such, a concept is formed and entertained, — I say when, then again, we have this much, can we *observe* the impact of the X-ray, which is to say, the physical, on the organ, or cerebral region, itself the physical? — or is it open to laboratory experiment *to prove*? And this is what I meant by “unable to observe, or to prove.”

It is here, I may add, assumed that it is still the physical making impact on the physical; for that the X or other occult ray should

be more refined, and, perhaps, not to be directly realized by our ordinary physical senses does not make it the less physical. There is a range of the solar spectrum far beyond that of which the human eye may have direct cognizance ; and vibrations of air far too slow or too rapid for the ear to respond to ; and, yet, which no one even thinks to entertain but as still physical. The magnet attracts by an invisible impalpable force bits of steel, and the earth is held in its course by the sun ninety-five millions of miles away ; and yet nobody doubts either magnetism or the attraction of gravitation to be physical. The limits, or in other words, the height and depth, of the physical, even no scientist affects to have yet sounded, or quite ever expects to sound ; and with much less grace may men of only average intelligence, and with no facilities for discovering the physical's bounds, affect to already know them. But only as once it is done may the confines of the physical be assumed to fall short of those of the mind, and not be inevitably correlated therewith.

Inq. And still do we not hear of mind and consciousness as were such in mid-air as it

were, and an independent entity ; and hear of percepts and concepts and so on being coined themselves, too, up among the clouds clear of the earth and the earthy, and even coined out of each other, as well as forged out of mind itself ? And do we not hear of percepts being molded and matted together and subjected to a sort of mental hydraulic pressure, or other jugglery, when straightway they come forth concepts, or come forth intuitions ? And does not "association of ideas"—phrase "coin of the realm"—carry with it the impression of ideas associating directly of themselves without "intercessor," and as were they independent of everything of a lower strain such as the physical is supposed to be ?

Or. Hear ?—do we not hear ? Oh yes, from every mental philosopher that ever drew the breath of life — and even from the modern psychologist as well. But it is naked to the bone of every bit of flesh of fact or rational thought to make it living truth. Hear ?—oh yes ; and yet all goes to make it too plain to be rationally doubted that behind the minutest mental event there is the correlated physical event its inevitable logical precursor ; and that

even *behind*, right in that very physical, is where all the positive activity, all the elaboration of whatsoever mental result takes place, and to which the coming of that mental climacteric upon the scene is only as passive aftermath ; and that it all goes on there precisely the same as it is in the differently colored glass slides and their manipulation *back* of the different colored lights thrown upon the screen or stage, *back* of these where all positive activity goes on to which the different colored lights themselves are due and are only as passive aftermath. That is, the *light does not labor with itself* to produce those different colors thrown upon the screen or stage ; and no more does consciousness wrestle with itself as might proceed the "association of ideas," or what passes for the consolidation of percepts or concepts with an outcome of an intuition or whatsoever, as tho they acted purely of their own initiative ; but the activity and result is all logically first behind in the physical *which is itself, as it were, the colored slides and their manipulation.*

Inq. In all this you have been meaning to insist that the conditions fundamentally of

consciousness are the same equally as the mind is turned inward as when turned outward; equally as any *whatsoever* content is involved whether percept or concept; and that those conditions are identified with the physical—or what at least viewed objectively is the physical.

Or. Certainly; and that being the case, then it is only logical to suppose and assume if consciousness in its direct delivery goes wildly astray as to what is beyond or more than the percept simply, as such, as the attention is directed outward, that it goes wildly so again as to anything over or beyond the concept as such as the attention is directed inward; and that it is positively illogical, and even imbecile, to suppose and assume it does not.

Inq. I understand; and it would seem as you say.

Or. Yes; and so for example in matter of the "self" of "self"-consciousness. If alliance *with the physical* in every instance of mental activity is, as a consequence, tantamount to a veil, a *wall*, before everything beyond as the mind is turned *outward*, then why not alliance

with the physical in every instance of mental activity, as a consequence, tantamount to a veil, a *wall*, before everything as the mind is turned *inward*? And so, even as I turn to *perceive myself*, as there is mental activity involved, and with that mental activity in that moment is allied the physical, and alliance with the physical is tantamount to a veil, a wall, that I should not see or realize beyond, then why not a *veil*, a *wall*, intercepting my seeing, my realizing, the conscious entity I am supposed to be conscious of, as I turn to see, to realize, *that*? Why do I not *then* see and realize only a *fiction*, only a something which I take to be an entity independent and conscious, but which is *neither*? Why do I not, as when I look *at* ether vibrations I see and realize only the interposing fiction of visual light?

27

Why Not Directly Conscious of One Another?

Inq. You noted a while ago that we cannot be directly conscious one of another's consciousness; and that the presumption, therefore, is that we never are and could never be thus conscious of a universal consciousness if there were any; or, at least, save only as our own was that any universal in continuity: but is not telepathy consciousness of another's consciousness?

Or. No, not at all. Telepathy, anyway, is very, very rare; but, as ever it occurs, it is consciousness, at the most, only of the *contents* of another's consciousness, never of another's *consciousness itself* — *never*. Never consciousness of another's consciousness, which itself must be realized, and realized as that another's, to realize a given content as content of that another's rather than merely of one's own consciousness.

Inq. What, then, can be the explanation that I cannot be directly conscious of your consciousness? — be directly conscious of you?

Or. Well, that you cannot be — that, but for physical signs, you could not know of my consciousness, know of me, know of my existence — is a very astonishing not to say astounding fact. And yet, it is one which, perhaps, has in it the confirmation, or the undermining, of any otherwise seemingly incontestable philosophy of mind, notwithstanding no explanation, so far as I know, has ever even been attempted; notwithstanding it is practically ignored as having any possible bearing on the philosophy of mind or even of consciousness itself. But what is the only possible explanation that I can think of is that involved as consciousness should be like light (or of which light is an illustration); like light in that it obtains objectively — as we have already given reasons for affirming it does — as also subjectively. As obtaining objectively it is, in a way, something lying abroad, as light objectively is something lying abroad and in the form of ether vibrations. And as light subjectively, that is, visual light,

the only light we know anything directly and positively of, has no being until that which is objective light, which is to say certain ether vibrations, encounters the eye and brain, — so consciousness subjectively, that is, consciousness as we familiarly know it and the only consciousness we know anything directly and positively about, has, it too, no being until what is objective consciousness encounters brain, or, at least, nervous tissue.

Inq. What ! — consciousness like light ? Why, it is as if you, instead of saying that what as ether vibrations is light objectively, had said was consciousness objectively.

Or. Exactly so.

Inq. And had said that only as that which is objective consciousness collides with brain (or at least with what, as looked at objectively is brain) does what is to be understood as subjective consciousness — the only consciousness with which we are directly familiar — obtain, and with visual light for content.

Or. Exactly so, again. And so also of objective sound, and, in fact, thru the whole gamut of our experiences in consciousness as

respects the external universe, — and the internal universe, too, as I was endeavoring to say; that is, the same when the mind is turned inward as when turned outward. For, as only a little while ago I was most strenuously insisting, we have no business, no logical business, to assume anything else but that as are *once* the conditions fundamentally of consciousness, so *ever* are the conditions of it. If then, once it is known only to obtain with the impact of something on something, the former functioning as objective consciousness as the fundamental terms of its obtaining, then always are these the terms, equally as the mind is directed inward as when directed outward, equally as a concept is entertained as when a sensuous percept is. If, as attention is directed outward, consciousness, such as we directly know, obtains as obtains objectively and lying abroad the like of objective light and objective sound, something physical functioning as objective consciousness and making impact on brain, brain as faculty, then, too, as the attention is directed inward, consciousness obtains only as there obtains objectively and lying abroad the parallel of objective light

and objective sound functioning as objective consciousness, and making impact on brain, brain as faculty. And thus we are to understand that there is objective consciousness as well as the consciousness only with which we are directly familiar; objective consciousness as well as what, as its correlate, we are compelled to recognize as subjective consciousness — as ever there *is consciousness at all*.

Besides, as if to confirm the view here taken, it is, remember, I say *remember*, the only one conceivable as affording the least explanation of why we are not and cannot be directly conscious of one another's consciousness, be directly conscious of one another. This view, however, affords it fully, affords it to perfection.

For, as everybody should know who pretends to an understanding of the current theory of light, the rays of light, that is, of objective light, in other words, the certain ether vibrations which enter my eyes, are not at all the same which enter another's eyes; and as I can see only the light of the rays entering *my* eyes and which *my* eyes and brain convert into visual light, and another

sees only the light of the rays entering *his* eyes and which *his* eyes and brain convert into visual light, neither I see the visual light which he sees, nor he that which I see. In a word, neither of us sees the light the other sees, nor can. And as in the instance of consciousness with visual light for its content, so in every instance of it; every instance of it, or of consciousness in general; every instance of it, as much when the attention is directed inward as when directed outward.

The rays, so to speak — paraphrasing in a way what I have just now said of light, that the idea I am seeking to convey may be readily understood — the rays of objective consciousness, that is of an objective somewhat to be distinguished as objective consciousness (and which in the particular case of light is known to be ether vibrations), these rays, which make impact on *my* brain and are converted into subjective consciousness, — the only consciousness with which I am directly familiar, — are not the same rays which come into relations with *another's* brain and by it are converted into subjective consciousness or the only consciousness of which he has direct knowledge.

And as in a particular instance of consciousness, that of the perception of light, so with consciousness in general; as I myself am aware of only that consciousness which the rays of whatsoever objective consciousness encountering *my* brain provoke, and another is aware of only the consciousness which the rays of objective consciousness encountering *his* brain provoke, so neither am I aware, nor can be, of the consciousness he is aware of, nor he of that of which I am aware. In a word, neither of us has direct knowledge of the other's consciousness, nor can have.

Inq. Well, certainly, with such a view of the subject, the solution of the problem of the impossibility of our directly recognizing one another is easy enough and, too, as illuminating as it is easy.

Or. But, more than this, there is nothing in the least improbable in it all. And, in fact, it itself and alone might almost be said to be crucial of our any assumed right understanding of mind, or even of consciousness itself. Besides, there is at least collateral suggestion, if not absolute proof of its truth.

Of course, it is objective light understood as

objective light which is susceptible of reflection, refraction, and so on, and wherefore visual light is thus susceptible. But objective light understood as objective *consciousness* would be equally so. And subjective light, or consciousness with visual light for content, — what can only be understood but as subjective consciousness as objective light is understood as objective consciousness, — must, as thus understood as subjective consciousness, be equally susceptible as when understood as subjective light; and be equally so, again, as much *because* objective consciousness is so, as that subjective light, as consciousness with visual light for content, is thus susceptible *because* objective light, as such, is so.

Still further, even. What we are to understand as subjective consciousness, or that only consciousness with which we are directly familiar, being thus susceptible in the instance of consciousness of light, the presumption is that it is always thus susceptible, as ever consciousness obtains; as much so, indeed, as the attention is directed *inward* as when directed outward; and thus susceptible, too, as in the instance of light again, *because* of a correlate

objective consciousness logically being *first* thus so.

And so, is it nothing in confirmation of this that consciousness should appear susceptible of such as reflection, refraction, and so on, as well when mind is turned inward as when turned outward? — as well when it is entertaining a concept as when a sensuous percept? Is it nothing, I say, in confirmation of this, that in self-consciousness, as it would seem to be, it is *consciousness as reflected* that we are then conscious of? Or, again, that in will, intellect, and moral sense (or, more properly, feeling, will, and intellect) we have, as would appear, the unit of mind and consciousness *refracted*, as in the primary colors of red, green, and blue we have the sunlight refracted? Or that, still again, in multiple personality we have, possibly, what might have its explanation in the mind's double refraction — and so on, and so on?

28

Why the Physical is not Recognized as
such as the Mind is Directed Inward

Inq. This, certainly, all seems plausible enough in the extreme, — all save one thing, which yet is not quite clear to me, and that is just how, as the mind turns from a look outward to a look inward, we are still to conceive of objective consciousness, and of such as is physical activity even, activity vibratory or other; or how, as obtaining, doing so as obtaining objectively and lying abroad.

Or. Well, it is not quite clear to you because, in the first place, you, as do we all, naturally enough expect as the mind is turned inward, and the things seen are seen to be interior, that the any physical activity — as there should be such there obtaining and functioning as objective consciousness — should itself be interior, too; that is, obtain within, within the mind, and even be recognized as the physical which it is; — you expect this,

but, at the same time, quite forgetting that *the physical, as ever it is recognized as such*, is so recognized because it is *seen* to be objective, — not seen to be objective because it is physical, — and *seen* to be objective *because it is, in fact, so* ; is in fact so, that is, is in fact altogether outside mind and brain ; which is to say, of course, that, as in fact it might *not* be outside, and was *within* mind and brain as it is supposed to be as the mind is turned inward, it could *not be seen* to be objective, and, *not seen* to be, it could not be recognized as *physical*, however much so it would be, did we but see it objectively.

Indeed, even tho the mind were filled to the brim, so to speak, with the physical — as, in fact, it *is* so filled, filled with *brain*, for everybody allows the brain to be spatially within the sphere of the mind, if not the author of it — the mind yet, as turned inward, recognizes nothing of that *physical as such*, nothing of that *brain as brain*, but, as seeing it at all, sees it *only as mind, mind or spirit, or that sort*. In very truth, when you are looking outward at ether vibrations, you are looking *at the very identical thing (as being physical)*

which you are looking at when you are looking inward at the brain. But, in the former case, you do not see ether vibrations as such, but as visual light what is only mind in a way — mind eject or mind product — and yet see it as *physical* because you *see* it as *objective*; and *see* it as objective because it *is* objective in fact, is, in fact, organically outside altogether both mind and brain; while in the latter instance, you do not see the brain as such, that is as physical, but as mind or mind product, spirit or the sort, because it is *not seen* to be objective, — and *not seen* to be, because it *is not in fact so*; and not seen to be so, and not in fact so, *it cannot be seen to be physical*.

Then, in the second place, it is because, — to say nothing of the possible more interior organ than such as eye or ear, and one responsive to possible other and finer vibrations of the all-pervading ether, yet of anything of which we know positively nothing, — you fail to recognize and appreciate the enormous fund of registered cerebral activity, vibratory or other, activity correlated with every experience in consciousness since its

dawn, and cumulative with the persistence of every waking moment ; and activity registered, or the conscious experience that goes with it could not be recalled ; — it is because, I say, you fail to recognize and appreciate this fund which, more or less of it as from one or another provocation recalled, can only be conceived but as functioning as objective consciousness.

Then, finally, it is not clear to you because you are under the impression that obtaining objectively and lying abroad must mean — and which, perhaps, it would usually be understood to, and yet not necessarily, and is not here meant to — obtaining outside brain and mind altogether. But registered experiences — by which, of course, should be understood the correlated physical and cerebral activity their invariable accompaniment and dependence — as recalled, and functioning as objective consciousness, obtain in a way as obtaining objectively and lying abroad ; obtain as obtaining outside the *particular* brain involved in the registration, and not as outside the brain altogether.

29

Is it Vibrations as Vibrations, or Vibrations only of a Particular Thing, which are the Cause, or Occasion, of Consciousness?

Inq. But there does, after all, occur to me still something further, in this connection, involving some confusion of understanding. Thus, consciousness is found obtaining with the impact on brain of very different things functioning as objective consciousness; very different, such as ether vibrations in the case of light, and as air vibrations in the case of sound;—how is that? One would not suppose objective consciousness could be two or more radically and utterly different things.

Or. Well, the meaning of this is either that it is the vibrations of no *particular* thing; that is, that *it is vibrations as vibrations simply*, a purely *mechanical* thing, and might be the vibrations of *anything*, which is the cause, or occasion, of consciousness; or else, *what is the only possible alternative*, namely, that it is the

vibrations of some *particular* thing only, and that such as air or oxygen and hydrogen are but *modes of being of that some particular thing*, and ether itself only still another mode of being of it; only still another mode of being of one and the same thing of which such as air or oxygen and hydrogen are modes or sub-modes. This, I say, is the only possible alternative; else, it is vibrations as vibrations, a purely *mechanical* thing, which is cause, or occasion, of consciousness.

Inq. This explanation, I should say, meets the case perfectly. And I now have a solution, illuminating and satisfying in the extreme, of the problem why we are not and cannot be directly conscious of one another's consciousness; why I am not and cannot be directly conscious of you, or you of me; as also how objective consciousness may superficially be very different things. Moreover, I should suppose, as you have said, that a solution of the enigma of why we are not directly conscious of one another must be itself and alone well-nigh crucial of the soundness of any philosophy of mind and consciousness, which, as affording none, could but well be set down for error, root and branch.

30

Whatever is, as It it is Permanent, is of
Necessity

Inq. What would you say is at least one, if not the only, fundamental and starting principle or proposition in philosophy?

Or. Why, that whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity; that the universe is because it must be.

Inq. How should you say that? How do we know that?

Or. We don't know it; we only know that such is the constitution of the untterrified and untrammeled human mind that it has to think that whatever is that is permanent is of necessity, as ever it essays to think, think as *realizing* in the matter at all; or we only know, again, that so surely as the universe is an evolution so surely is it one of necessity. For with the universe an evolution is absolutely impossible everything of universe as watch and watchmaker, watchmaker whether outside the watch or inside. And the universe not

as watch and watchmaker is the universe an involuntary one, which is to say one of necessity ; for there is absolutely again no halting station between the universe not as watch and watchmaker and the universe one of necessity.

Inq. And so you would affirm that as there is anything permanent it is because it must be ; and *such* as it is it is because it must be.

Or. I would.

Inq. And would say, then, as there was what we recognize as act or activity, act or activity creative after a sort, creative as tempered of the doctrine of evolution, — that such there must be ; must be as ever must there be anything at all. That is, that act or activity obtains because it must, and it takes the round of evolution and involution because it must, must as there is to be act or activity at all ; and must as must there be that act or activity at all to be anything whatsoever at all.

Or. Truly so.

Inq. Yes, and say again, that whatsoever, whether stone, tree, animal, or man obtains the outcome of that creative act or activity, must be ; that is, must of necessity obtain, and of necessity do so as the outcome of that act or activity.

31

Man in potentia, and the Making for
Man, and Man in the Making a
Necessity to Absolute Being

Or. That is it. But here, now, this corollary of it all, namely, that man — and so of stone and tree — exists *of* the creative act, or activity of the round of evolution and involution, of *necessity*, makes it eo ipso that man exists of necessity *to* that act or activity. That is, there could not possibly be at all act or activity but as obtained at *least man in potentia, and the making for man, and man in the making.*

There could not possibly be that act or activity, creative in a sense, but as there was the creation of *something*, any more than could there possibly be exercise of faculty for inventing but as proceeded the *invention* of *something*; and *what*, I say, there was creation of as it was creature *of* that creative act or activity *of necessity, that*, whatsoever, is creature of

necessity *to* that creative act or activity — which, as that creature was man, as it is known, and in the premises assumed to be, it is man of very necessity *to* that creative act or activity. And, indeed, we have not only man absolutely necessary to such act or activity, but man absolutely necessary to there being anything at all ; absolutely necessary, that is, to *Being Itself* that *It* be at all ! Put in theological parlance, — *things* (in which you and I, of course, are included) are as absolutely necessary to the Being of God as is the Being of God to things.

And thus it would appear that if human being, if human consciousness, if man, in a word, is not quite the father of his own father, he is at least absolutely necessary to his own father's existence as is the one end of a stick to the other, and to the stick itself, as there is to be at all either the other end or the stick itself.

Inq. But man thus a necessity to Absolute Being at all, to anything at all in fact, leaves not any part of whatsoever is permanent, author and final cause of the remaining part ; leaves it no more author and final cause than

is the one end of a stick the author and final cause of the other end, which itself, the one end, could have no existence, and the stick none, but for the other end.

Or. No.

Inq. But this would leave no possible opening to wedge into the Universe of Being, no possible opening to obtain back of things, any such as the Being of God as author and final cause, — author and final cause of things, that is to say, of the universe as it is physical. And the absence of such as should be author and final cause of the physical universe is, I should suppose, the absence of Being of God altogether; for Being of God no author and final cause at all, is to the effect of no Being of God at all — is it not?

Or. Why, certainly. Moreover, what I have just shown to follow from whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity, as that should be true, even the doctrine of the universe an evolution only confirms. For that doctrine involves what is much a parallel of the physical human body with its blood-corpuscles. Thus the body could have no continued existence but for the blood-corpuscles;

and the corpuscles themselves could have none but for the body; and still that neither is altogether the author or final cause of the other. And so the very universe itself, too, — and by universe I mean to include everything that has being or existence, — could not obtain but for things, nor things but for the universe. And indeed it is with things as it is with the blood-corpuscles; as it is these *and* the body (aside from them), jointly, which are authors or final cause — as much as is anything their cause — of both, and the corpuscles in part author (or the maintenance) not only of the body but, in part, *of themselves*, themselves their *own* author in part; so it is with things and the whatsoever besides — as there is anything besides — in the universe, it is the two jointly which are author or maintenance of the whole; and things — meant to include you and me, of course — in part author or the maintenance not only of the residual universe but in part origin and cause (as much so as is anything) of *themselves*, themselves in part their own origin and cause, the rest of the universe being the remaining part as should be origin and cause.

32

Man only a By-product or By-end

Inq. But man existing of necessity, and of necessity *to* the end pure and simple of the creative act or activity's realization of itself, is not man existing as for his own sake ; is not man brought into being as from interest anywhere with anything or anyone in him as for himself.

Or. No ; and therein is another corollary of whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity ; another, and that man, therefore, is no more to be understood to exist for his own sake than do the marble chips which fly off under the blows of a sculptor in the evolution of a marble statue ; these are made to exist that the statue may exist — that it may is their only excuse for being.

Inq. As the chips of marble obtain only incidentally, they are what, technically, I suppose, would be called by-products ; and so you would say that man is only a by-product ?

Or. Yes ; or more fittingly, perhaps, a by-end ; tho as what is directly aimed at once realized is a product, whatever may be that realized, so that, too, whatsoever falling incidentally, once realized, is a by-product, a by-end if you prefer. Man himself, — and so stone and tree, — as obtaining of necessity to the end of creative act or activity, is only a by-product or by-end ; and so in which or whom there is at the fountain-head of Being no more interest, no more direct interest at least, than has the sculptor in his marble chips.

Inq. But man only incidental, only a by-product or by-end, and in whom there is with Being at large no interest as for his own sake, is a view right the reverse of that current among men ; and quite dwarfing his own importance, as he has hitherto fancied it, in the universal consciousness.

Or. Never mind that. It quite dwarfs him and his importance in one way, and magnifies both in another.

33

The Main Product or End the Creative
Act or Activity as for Its Own
Sake purely

Inq. But if a man is only a by-product or by-end, what then, is the main product or end of the creative act or activity?

Or. Why, the creative act or activity itself, itself as realized; *that act or activity itself for its own sake* the prime motive at the heart of things; *that* the infinite passion; *that* the genius of the universe; *that the main product or end*, and nothing beyond — or nothing unless this perhaps were to include an accompaniment or aftermath of ecstasy of that act or activity as it was to be supposed conscious; — everything else whatsoever, even man, even human consciousness, but incidental and by-product or by-end.

34

Positive Proof of Man only a
By-product

Inq. But that in man, that in human consciousness, there is no interest as for his or its own sake, and he or it but a by-product or by-end, is itself simply a corollary again, as a deduction drawn from the most abstract of abstractions, the abstraction that whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity. And is there nothing *ex post facto*, nothing of experience or observation, to confirm the view both that the main product or end of Being is creative act or activity for the act's or activity's own sake purely, and also that man falls simply an incident by the way, as it were?

Or. Oh, certainly; and very much to confirm it. And, first, and what is only modestly suggestive, not amounting to proof, is that genius has been said to be Godlike; and Godlike because peculiarly creative, creative *sui generis*; absorbingly so, so absorbingly so in the instance of first-class genius as to be the

very personification of creative activity for the creative activity's own sake even. Lessing said that could he in the beginning have had his choice either to be possessed with all possible knowledge to start with, or to be simply endowed with faculties by which to acquire it, he should have chosen the latter — such to him the transport in the mental activity involved in the acquisition.

Again, genius of the first order for invention turns its back with relief upon its own past achievements in mechanical devices, to find its paramount enthusiasm and heaven only in the throes of fresh invention. Its frenzy is in the act or activity of inventing, not in the once invented ; in the procession of the perfecting, not in the invented perfect — or not in these except *as reflecting its success*. Thomas A. Edison, the greatest inventive genius of his time, if not of any time, has been said to be even sick of his own inventions once perfected, wishing never to see or hear of them again ; this, of course, apart from any gain or fame to come of them. And even if this be somewhat of an exaggeration, and creative mind does take some little delight

in its creations, still it is delight in them more as evidences of its success than of anything else. Even lesser inventors have been known to give away invention after invention, losing all further interest in them once they were accomplished facts.

But now then, if genius is Godlike, as has been said, and Godlike as it is peculiarly creative, and its frenzy is more in the creative act than in the contemplation of the perfected outcome, then we have in genius the hint at least of what the motive of the Supreme Power is; what that, in theological parlance, of the Being of God, as there might be such, is, and that with It or Him, it is, as with genius, the creative act or activity itself for its own sake, rather than for the sake of its any whatsoever outcome. And, surely, if with Lessing, if with genius, "the *journey* be the goal," then why not, with Almighty Power, the *journey* be the goal! If "with genius, heaven means *the zest of the march and the open road forever*," then why not with Almighty Power, heaven mean *the zest of the march and the open road forever*!

This, men of genius, at least, can well un-

derstand, even if men so undeveloped that they are only men of talent may not.

Then again, further, it is history that with the expansion of the sense of the vastness and dignity of Being outside man, has come a growing sense in man himself of the *comparative* insignificance and unimportance of his own being itself in the fancied consciousness of the Supreme Power. During all the ages before Copernicus, and for a long time after, the universe was only a seven by nine affair, as it seemed in the estimation of men, with all interest of a Supreme Being centered in this little earth of ours, and in man on it; the Almighty Himself even, it being represented as late as the seventeenth century, hanging out the stars come night-time, and purely for man's delectation and benefit; and then with His own hand taking them in again with the return of the dawn. And could anything be more suggestive than this of the pettiness of men's view of the universe and of the Supreme Being? — or more suggestive of the insufferable conceit of the individual man's own opinion of himself in the regard of conscious Cosmic or Supreme Being, as con-

scious might that be? And, to-day, even yet, lost as is the individual man — himself but a fly-speck on a fly-speck of a world — to all sense of proportion as he exaggerates his own importance in the eye as it were of the Supreme Power, he still, in his own estimate of himself, is of nothing that absorbing concern in the Supreme Consciousness as he imagines It, that he once was. And I mean to say that there is in this *drift* of things suggestion again, at least, if not proof, of creative act or activity for its own sake, and of man only a by-product or by-end.

But now, still further, and what amounts to the most positive evidence, and evidence verging at least on unequivocally demonstrative proof, even if it is not quite that altogether, is the fact of the utter recklessness displayed by the whatsoever responsible at the root of things, in respect of "the individual man," even tho, may be, "so careful of the type she [it] seems."

The earth, for instance, suddenly anon gapes and swallows up tens of thousands of human beings at a gulp; or, again, thousands or millions are carried off by flood or famine, fire

or pestilence ; and all with no more apparent twinge of feeling or concern anywhere with Being at large for the victims than were men but so many handfuls of indifferent dust. The only possible suggestion of it all is that there obtains nowhere care at all for anything but *life* ; no care for any particular form, or for forms whatsoever at all, only that the only alternative is *no life, no creative activity at all, as no forms at all*.

Is it said that it is all only because of man's ignorance or willful perversity ? And *is* it all because of that ? *Is* it indeed chargeable to the *infant in arms* that, because of *its* ignorance or perversity, *it* is carried suddenly and perhaps agonizingly out of life by earthquake, fire, or pestilence, — as millions of them are ? Or *is* it thus chargeable as the infant is born in a slum — as millions, again, of them are — of drunken parents, and the victim of all the vicious consequences entailed thereby ? Simply to put this question is enough to show the utter absurdity of the plea in explanation or extenuation of the apparent absence of all concern anywhere for men's well-being ; the absurdity of the plea of man's ignorance or

willful perversity as responsible and reproachable altogether for what befalls him.

In very truth, the universe conducts itself *precisely as were* it indifferent ; and why not then in all reason *suppose and assume* it indifferent ? And is there not indeed here what at least verges on, even if it be not quite altogether demonstrative proof of, motive at the root of things, of interest in the creative act or activity as for its own sake purely — as there were to be said to be motive at all — and of man being only a by-product ?

There is, true enough, besides, misfortune and pain falling to man largely of his own fault ; but this does not invalidate that there is a world of it of which men are the victims for which they are not responsible. And this all can have but one interpretation, and that one *that it is the creative act or activity for its own sake* that is explanation of the impulse at the foundation of things, impulse wherefore suns and worlds and man exist ; meanwhile man himself — and so, too, stone and tree — answering to other end than himself that end ; other end as the chips which fly off in the evolution of the statue answer to other end than themselves that end.

35

Man no more than Men the Main
Product or End

Inq. But might it not be *man* the primary, direct, or main product or end, and only *men* a by-product or by-end?

Or. No; and because that only could be main product as it should be product distinctively such from other product; and man as he is distinctively product beside the rest of creation below him, *which includes consciousness* which he only *shares* with that creation below, is product too utterly, too ridiculously, too infinitely insignificant for all proportion between product and producer, producer assumed as it is to be infinite, not to be hideously outraged as it is claimed for man that he is creation's direct or main product. Consciousness is the greatest of all marvels, the wonder of wonders; and man, as I have said, only shares it with the manifest universe below him. Wherefore, that man, who only shares with the remainder

of creation this most wonderful of all things, should be the main product or end of all, is simply logically *impossible*. Were man clean thru and altogether distinct, different, and superior; even were he alone of all creatures conscious, any such claim for him might have some shadow of warrant; but, as it is, it is without even that shadow to make it respectable.

36

The Volitional Utterly Excluded

Inq. I should suppose that the proposition, "Whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity," utterly excluded everything of the volitional from the realm of absolute Being.

Or. And so it does.

Inq. And that with it, with that exclusion, goes the universe as watch and watchmaker.

Or. Most assuredly.

Inq. I should think, too, that the late trick of the theists driven to bay by the doctrine of evolution, the trick of putting the watchmaker inside the watch, would hardly answer its purpose.

Or. And it doesn't. The watchmaker immanent inside the watch is just as much the universe as watch and watchmaker as is the watchmaker emanent outside the watch. Only as the watchmaker, only in virtue of whose volition the watch exists, is snuffed out, is the vo-

litional itself snuffed out ; and which, "Whatsoever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity," does indeed snuff out, and make absolutely impossible the universe of Being as watch and watchmaker, as *making impossible the watchmaker himself*.

Inq. I should think that plain enough.

37

Evolution Confirms both Proposition
and Corollary

Or. Well, as it should not be, and something seem needed to confirm this itself, still another corollary, as it is of the proposition, "Whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity," corollary of the impossibility of the universe of Being as watch and watchmaker; and to even lend color of inerrancy to the proposition itself, we have it in the doctrine of evolution. For then we have the universe an evolution as contradistinguished from the universe a creation — creation in the old orthodox or theological sense, sense of something made out of nothing, and not in the sense in which even evolution itself is a creation in a way. We then have, I say, a universe an evolution what is a universe of only *one* activity instead of two or three distinct activities as in the universe a creation; only *one* activity, and that one an involuntary one, and

an activity in virtue of which, as *anything* is, *everything* is which is ; one in virtue of which the manifest universe is, and is everything altogether ; or, as might be that universe snuffed out, would be snuffed out everything altogether ; — quite the contrary as the manifest universe were a creation, and the universe of Being altogether as watch and watchmaker. Quite the contrary, for then, as I have said, we have at least two distinct activities instead of only one ; two, one in virtue of which the watchmaker, which is to say, the Creator, has being, and another, an activity of an activity so to speak, a voluntary activity, one superimposed on and exerted by an involuntary one, and in virtue of which the watch, which is to say the manifest universe, has being, — has, and might not be snuffed out, still that should the watchmaker, or creator, be ; or, at all events would not watchmaker or Creator be as should watch or manifest universe be.

38

The Positively Moral also Excluded

Inq. But I should suppose, again, that the proposition, "Whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity," excluded not only everything of the volitional, but also everything of the positively moral, from the outlying universe.

Or. And it does.

Inq. For how can creative act or activity for its own sake solely, with no interest in the product as for the product's own sake, be positively moral? — how be exercised with love, justice, mercy, and the like?

Or. It cannot be. You remember that in another connection it was remarked that the conduct of the universe was such as could only consist with indifference as to mankind, and it was asked, Why not, then, in all reason *suppose and assume* indifference there? And here comes the demonstration — or at least the inevitability — of indifference, and of even worse, as is once admitted this fundamental proposition of whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity.

39

Blessings no Evidence of Beneficence

Inq. I know, — but there are blessings, as we conceive them, of which we are the recipients; are they not proof of interest in us as for our own sake at the heart of things, interest in our well-being and happiness?

Or. Well, and is there not evil too, cursings, as one may say, with which we are afflicted; and are not these indeed proof as much of the contrary and of even a malevolent interest in us in that same heart of things?

Inq. Cursings? Cursings — is that it?

Or. Yes, cursings. Suppose, for a single example, you were born in a "slum," and of drunken parents; born feeble, diseased, a cripple, perhaps blind, to suffer for months and years, in agony much of the time, and to die at last in agony; meanwhile to be the victim of neglect and brutality, and of altogether the morally most pestilential environment imaginable, and all for nothing of which

you were in the least responsible, — what would that be if not cursings?

Inq. I confess, if it were not, our imagination must fail us of conceiving what it could be.

Or. Well, the blessings and the cursings may, then, be said to offset each other.

But now let me show you that the blessings, not even as were *absent* such as the evil or cursings that afflict us, could imply any interest in us as for our own sake; show not only that they must fail to imply anything moral, but that they may perfectly consist with the positively immoral; and, except that they consist too with the simply non-moral, must even positively argue to a demonstration the positively immoral.

Suppose a born athlete, and one selfish to the last degree, and even brutal, having indeed murdered his own father in order the sooner to come into possession of his inheritance; but withal, too, a man of unusual common-sense. Suppose further that, as would be natural, his ambition ran to athletics and its prizes. His unusual common-sense would then stand him in good stead not only to dis-

cover to him the terms of his success in every contest, and that they were those of healthy and vigorous life conditioned on plain food, much bathing, abundance of sunshine, and of exercise in the open air, together with abstinence from tobacco and all intoxicants ; but also to nerve him to conform his habit of life in strict accordance therewith, and with so rigid fidelity that never is he afflicted in any part of his bodily economy with either pain or illness such as were to be construed as evil or cursings. Given, then, what may be assumed — physical perfection.

But now particularly let us notice that his blood-corpuscles, with the rest, are at the very top of their condition. We then have only to imagine them conscious, and sensible of their good fortune, that they might seem to be overheard exclaiming much as men do of *their* blessings and of *their* host, the Supreme Power : “ Oh, our blessings, how manifold they are, blessings of abundance of sunshine and pure air and pure food, these and more which inure to our abounding health and vigor and our electrical joy in life ; and how good must be our host, how beneficent, to have so

much heart interest in us, as for our own sake that he should pay the attention he does to all these things ! ”

And yet, and yet, their host, as we have assumed in the premises, is a scoundrel, and has nothing of interest in them as for their own sake at all ; and only interest in them for his own sake pure and simple ; and indeed, he may not even know that they exist.

And now, in all this, is there not shown, as was my wish to show, that blessings even in the absence of all such as evil or cursings fail to imply good, fail to imply beneficence or interest in others as for their own sake ?

But now, then, if blessings even in the *absence* of all such as evil or cursings count for nothing in evidence of beneficence in the host, as in our illustration of the athlete, how much less than nothing must they count as evidence of it in what is mankind's host, the Supreme Power, when are *present* evil or cursings such as with which men are afflicted ! For then the situation amounts indeed, as would seem at first glance at least, to *quite a demonstration of even positive malevolence* at the heart of things. And it *would*, in fact,

altogether amount to this, only that by a similar illustration to that by which blessings were put out of court as evidence of goodness anywhere, evil or cursings, as evidence of malevolence anywhere, can be.

So that it comes to this, that blessings under no circumstances *whatever* can be of significance to the effect of beneficence, which is to say goodness or kindness in *intent*. And that *man's* any blessings, real or imaginary, least of all argue goodness or kindness in intent at the center of things, and least of all, manifestly, because *accompanied* by what we recognize as evils.

40

Blessings and Evil or Cursings Significant Only of Good or of Evil in Effect

Or. But to proceed a step further. If blessings as significant of goodness in intent, and if evil or cursings as significant of malevolence in intent, can both be put out of court, then it follows that as they must have *some* significance they must have that only possible one left for them to have, namely, that of blessings and evil or cursings *in effect* only. They then would be nothing of import either of the positively moral or of the positively immoral, at the heart of the universe; and their only possible alternative significance could be that of the *non-moral* back of both, which non-moral is the equivalent of *indifference* at the core of things, precisely, again, as we were obliged to recognize, a while ago. And this goodness and badness, this beneficence and malevolence only such *in effect*, is *precisely* the goodness and badness, the benefi-

cence and malevolence, of a machine ; say, a locomotive, which brings me in safety and in time to the bedside of my friend that I see him before he dies, — which is goodness *in effect* ; or which same locomotive, again, as it bursts its boiler and scalds to death its engineer, exhibits badness, badness *in effect*. It is precisely, too, the goodness and badness of the *universe an evolution*, which starts with only the *capacity* for consciousness, which is developed afterwards, and which, that it does so start, forbids that it set out with either goodness or badness *in intent*, or anything *else in intent* ; and compels that its goodness and badness be only such as is *such in effect* ; be nothing such as is such in intent, the beneficence no more than the malevolence.

4 I

Suffering Has No Mission

Inq. I have not thought to ask you what is the mission of suffering ; but I should think that “ Whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity,” relegated the notion that it had any — relegated that, too, with the rest, to the limbo of the absurd or impossible.

Or. And perhaps it does. But suffering, anyhow, cannot in reason be conceived as having a mission. Suffering is with *result* simply — sometimes mischievous, sometimes innocent, and even sometimes, again, positively beneficent ; *but it is without a mission.*

A meteorite falls and strikes a greenhouse, wrecking it ; would you say it is the mission of meteorites to smash greenhouses ? Or it falls striking and killing instantly a Bengal tiger about to kill and devour a human being — a beneficent result, beneficent in effect surely ; but would you say, even then, that

meteorites had a mission, that mission being to protect men from Bengal tigers? Why more say that suffering — which, too, at one time, works ruin and drives a man to the mad-house, and at another makes for his benefit, — that that has a mission, mission either for good or for ill? Certainly that can have no mission to save which is as likely to *damn* as to save.

Inq. I confess I do not see, myself, how it could.

Or. Of course, our idea of a mission in a thing is of a something specially intended for the purpose, whatsoever the purpose. A balance-wheel of a watch is such a something; but a rock accidentally in the middle of a brook, which enables me to cross without wetting my feet, is not such a something, and has no mission; but it *serves*. Now, suffering is not that balance-wheel of a watch — it is the rock in the stream; and it, too, sometimes *serves*. But it has a mission no more than the rock.

Inq. And still we hear it declared on every hand that suffering has a mission, namely, our development and well-being.

Oh yes ; and as tho these could come in no other and even better way ; and in fact as tho might not, in any instance, have come even greater development and well-being in some other way, come thru some other and less harrowing agency.

But this is all gratuitous assumption. My corn and cabbages, I notice, and my garden-flowers, develop and thrive best with abundance of moisture and sunshine, only gentle breezes, and kindly care ; and am I to believe the human plant is any exception ? By no means. I should be a fool to believe so, and I will not be that fool.

Inq. Why then do men insist on the idea that suffering has a mission to the end of man's development and well-being ?

Or. Why ? Only that they know no better and are more led by a craven, puling, sickly sentiment than by an enlightened reason — that for one thing, not to name others.

Besides, if it is the mission of suffering to develop, why interfere with one's development ? Why interfere with one's well-being if one's development is one's well-being ? The only possible reply, in reason, to this is that there is

some suffering which may bring good, and some which brings harm ; and that it is only in the event of that conceived to bring harm that it is to be presumed interference could be with any profit, and be in reason and justified. But even this would not be to the effect of the truth of the general proposition that suffering had a mission. As I said before, that can have no mission to save which is as likely to damn as to save.

42

Evil No Mystery

Inq. But if suffering has no mission, and some of it at least works mischief, then some of it at least is what is understood as evil — isn't it? And there we have it — evil. And evil, evil in general — what a mystery it is! But perhaps that, too, evil as a mystery, "takes to the woods" before the proposition, "Whatever is, as it is permanent, is of necessity."

Or. Well, whether it does or not is needless to discuss; since, as suffering anyway was said to have no mission, so again it is to be said of evil that evil, anyway, is no mystery. Mystery — why, no, it is nothing that, as I have before this incidentally remarked, except as we ourselves make it that. We ourselves in our stupidity make it a mystery, and then wonder at the mystery it is! And we make it that when we *assume consciousness a thing primary*, as we do when we assume an infinite intelligence abroad, of infinite love, justice,

mercy, and the like ; assume, in a word, a Being of God, — with which it is and will be for all time a puzzle indeed how ever evil could consist.

However, evil in the light of the universe an evolution instead of a creation is no mystery ; because then, as we have seen, there is only *one* activity abroad instead of two or more ; only *one* activity, and in virtue of which, as *anything* is, *everything* is ; only one, and not two, — two, namely, an activity in virtue of which such as the Being of God, a “creator,” obtains ; and another, *a* *voluntary* activity, an activity superimposed on the first, in virtue of which the manifest universe, the “creature,” obtains ; the same as are two, one in virtue of which I and my body exist, and another, in virtue of which a waggon I may make exists. And as only *one* activity, and not two, — not two and involving *a Being of God*, — therefore is evil no mystery, none whatever. It is this obstinate and stupid assumption of consciousness as a thing fundamental, which brings in its train all the gravest of the so-called mysteries (all the so-called, tho not the one only real mystery, a

two-fold one, namely, *that* there is anything at all, and *what* the anything is, what positively and in itself it is, which is), which have exercised thinking minds since time began ; mysteries such as suffering, evil, and the rest, which are such not only but as we make them so by this assumption, — assumption without warrant in evidence or reason, — but worse than this, make them so as we assume consciousness a thing primary, flat in the face of a possible demonstration to the contrary, which, if not unequivocal and complete to the last degree, is at least as near that as any human mind has power *to conceive*.

43

At Last

Inq. One thing more. What in brief is the meaning of human existence? what the end of it? and what at last the crowning occupation and enthusiasm of the individual human life?

Or. The meaning of human existence is its necessity to existence in general, to the existence at all of anything at all. You, to know this, have only to recall what I said of man as only a by-product.

Inq. And what the end of human existence?

Or. Well, what shall you mean by the end? If by it you shall mean the end as human existence itself *serves*, then its end, which this service is, is the service which one end of a stick is to the other; which one end, so to speak, of the universe is to the other, as there is to be stick at all or universe at all — and which has already been stated to be

its meaning, if even now it is said to be its end as well.

Or, again, if you shall mean by the end of human existence the end as that existence *is served* rather than as it serves, then happiness is that end, and is the answer to your inquiry.

But if, still again, rather than anything of this, you shall mean what is the fate at last of the individual man, then it might be answered that what is the fate of any particular wave of the sea, or of any particular blood-corpuscle of man's life-current, namely, extinction and supersedure by others, — that may, perhaps, be the fate of one and another particular man, still that men, or man, like waves and like blood-corpuscles, should go on forever and ever.

Inq. And now, what, at last, the crowning occupation and enthusiasm of the individual life?

Or. It is this : when not the passionate pursuit of truth, then the alternating experience in consciousness implied in — “I am God in Nature, I am a weed by the wall.”

OCT 25 1900

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2004

Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 194 620 A

